

the Circle

Spring 1981

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The purpose of the *Circle* magazine shall be to serve as forum for the artists, writers, and photographers within the community of Auburn University. This magazine would be a popular publication oriented toward those who wish to read articles on politics, the sciences, the arts, or entertainment, (as directly or indirectly related to campus). These articles will be written from a human interest perspective rather than from the factual perspective offered in the *Plainsman*.

The Circle wishes to thank all the students and faculty members whose help made this issue possible.

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Poetry, photography and artwork throughout issue

The Inner Circle

"And it came to pass" is as familiar a scriptural phrase as any. Yet, I never realized its full meaning until this year.

When I returned to Auburn in January, after recuperating the previous quarter from an ankle injury, I didn't know exactly what I would be taking on (to completion, this time) as *Circle* editor. So, guzzling Tabs, biting nails and consulting my friend Lefus, I set out to discover what the job actually demanded.

Often, I felt that the magazine would never be completed. But, thanks to the skill and the hard work of Kaye and the staff, completed it is.

Special thanks also goes to the fantastic folks at #1 Mortgage Heights, the Auburn Santa and fellow members

of the Astron Sailing Team, without whose support and encouragement the task could not have been accomplished.

Because of the responsibility of the position and because of the friends who helped the magazine become a reality, I have realized that "And it came to pass" is not an outdated idea but is just as true today as it was when the Author of Life penned it for the first time.

My challenge to you, the students of Auburn, is to support and to contribute to the *Circle*, so that it can be enjoyed by students for years to come.

Beth Holman
Editor



Illustration by Kathy Abney

Number One

by Amy Dawes

The incomparable Michael DeLoche was back in town. An enchanting moment of nostalgia drenched his heart as he sailed through the first intersection. It was as brief and heady as the delicious assault of a honeysuckle vine upon the senses passed in an open car in the early spring. The emotion repeated itself at the next intersection, and the next, until he in his dented blue pick-up truck fairly floated through the village of his alma mater in a glow of euphoria, one arm out the window to experience the cool rush of air against the open palm, the other with a finger looped lazily around the steering wheel.

The sinking sun was throwing glaring goodbyes to the store windows, which they returned intensified. The open beer in Michael's lap was still cool, and the radio began playing a rock tune he had often danced to on the weekends in what he called his endeavors to "transcend the physical limits of the civilized world." So high was the pleasure of the moment that he bypassed the corner that would take him to Pound Street, where he had last resided and where his dearest friends were waiting for him, and guided his truck down the main street of the campus, where the imposing Greek-revival facades of the buildings, the bricks rose-colored in the last light, lent what he considered an hilarious air of academic credibility to the atmosphere.

For five memorable years Michael had splashed noisily through the experiences offered in the town, turning one way and then another, trying to find the right direction in which to strike out. He had first seen himself as an architect pledged to change the face of American cities—until he realized how long it would take. Then he had gone into design but become dismayed at the prospects of corporate obscurity. For one term he had considered himself an up-and-coming journalist, until he realized the minor wattage on which even the brightest of those lights burned. In the temporary lull that followed this disappointment, he had started a rock band that was really quite good, until personal differences dissolved it. Then he had run for city council and won, and immediately resigned. Michael DeLoche's ambitions had always been grandiose, but his attention span could never compete. When friends asked Michael what was happening, they were sure to get an intriguing answer or be swept up in his latest project, and so Michael always had all the friends and attention he knew what to do with. But he felt these things could not be accepted unless they were justified. With a year and a half to go in school he had dropped everything else and turned to the theatre, plunging into this new pursuit with a fanaticism that exceeded all previous—for at last he had discovered the direct route to his desires, and what was more, a life in which he could express his individuality and irrepressible talents.

Michael DeLoche had presence, passion, and a keen feel

for character. By the time he graduated he was being talked about in theatre circles well outside the confines of the university. A reviewer from a nearby metro paper called the young actor a "rising star." Michael treasured the clipping and kept it in his wallet. An influential friend had since helped him make contacts in Chicago, where he was now getting just enough work to keep him busy hoping. At present, he had a week of leisure, and after a visit to his parents he decided to swing down South for a final appearance in his old home.

Michael lit a cigarette as he drove, and, when it was done, he pulled into the steep gravel driveway of an aging white bungalow, once the pride of a modest town family but long since given over to rental status and the physical decay accelerated by careless youth.

Instantly the door flew open and a knot of yelling, laughing and delightfully familiar bodies flung themselves across the yard, pulling him from the truck and subjecting him to an extended session of embraces and exclamations, accompanied by hearty declamations of the condition of life since he had been gone.

Then there were the questions: What was it like in the city? Was there plenty of work? How was the social life? Had he seen any concerts? Did he miss them, and couldn't he stay at least through the weekend?

As they drew him into the house, he countered with conversation of his own, remarking on how unchanged everything seemed and how good it felt to be back. How were they getting along in school, and was there any hope of Brian's ever-elusive graduation?

The reunion proceeded grandly into the night. Nancy produced a tremendous dinner of spaghetti and home-grown salad, for which Michael and Brian felt obliged to repay her with lusty renditions of favorite love songs while they did the dishes, and the cat from next door chose the date to deliver her first litter of kittens, which they all had a hand in bringing into the world, under their front porch.

Brian deemed it the perfect occasion to produce three long-hoarded bottles of Mateus, and, as the evening progressed, more and more friends learned of Michael's appearance and joined the party.

Late in the course of all this Michael's sense of well-being was slightly disturbed by the appearance of the new roommate, who had moved into Michael's room sometime after his departure. He was introduced as Michael too, ("There certainly are a lot of Michaels around," they all agreed), a coincidence that was compounded for the thoroughly intoxicated Michael when, in his customary appraisal of a new acquaintance, he discovered a remarkable number of similarities in both appearance and manner between himself and the new Michael. In keeping with the prevailing mood,

they both acceded to the harmonious chords within them by striking up a warm conversation, and as the party wound down at an hour well past midnight, everyone agreed it ranked among any evening they had spent in the house,

Michael DeLoche awoke the next morning, sprawled in his favorite spot on the couch on the screened-in porch, to the incessant singing of a mockingbird perched on a low branch just outside the screen. As he shook himself awake and began to focus on the sounds of day, he experienced the strangest feeling of *deja vu*. Someone was playing an album inside the house, and the music was the exact same that he had always played on mornings like this. It was a melancholy album of acoustic guitar and classical strings arranged by a suicidal English songwriter of the last decade. No one Michael had ever met had the album except him. He let himself in and went quietly into the back hall. Brian and Nancy were not around, but he found the roommate resting on top of the covers in his old bed. His face was turned away, and he didn't hear Michael DeLoche, as he was absorbed in the music revolving on his turntable. Michael took the opportunity to observe something about this new roommate. He had left the furniture in the room arranged exactly as it had been before. Not that there was anything stupid about that—Michael's arrangement had clearly been a good one—but didn't people usually rearrange the furniture in a new place? Just to give them a sense of having claimed it? Maybe it was because the new roommate's personal things fit so well into the places Michael's things had been. In fact, to a careless observer the room would have looked unchanged from when Michael lived there. Someone could very easily imagine that Michael had never left, he thought with amusement. He turned to the kitchen to get some breakfast.

Minutes later he came back and stood in the doorway. His usual appetite had been absent. He focused on something else about this new Michael that had bothered him greatly last night. The new Michael had long blond ringlets that fell about his shoulders and tumbled onto his back, which was at present shirtless and complimented by the beginnings of a glowing tan. Michael DeLoche had had such hair once, and it had been his special pride, the flower of his beauty, the badge of his individuality. Even strangers knew of Michael when he had worn that hair. He was easily described. Soon after he entered the theatre he had shorn it close to his head, so that his career could be more versatile. He felt that he still looked distinctive, but now here was this new Michael with all the splendor of Michael's carefree days tumbling down his back! For an instant Michael felt wronged—as if he had been robbed of something. Then he regained himself and his feelings subsided into a pale jealousy. At that moment the record ended and the roommate stirred, and Michael DeLoche fled the doorway and slid out of the house, as stealthily as an Indian brave.

He spent the sort of day he had often dreamed of during the long winter in Chicago—visiting with friends, presenting himself at the theatre department where he regaled the students he met with tales of his adventures in the city. As for his modest success in the theatre, he related it with an air of such sincere modesty that the students believed he was play-

ing it down just to spare their feelings and came away believing that Michael DeLoche had the world by the tail. And indeed he did, he thought happily as he walked home, whistling a tune with his hands plunged deep in his pockets and his shoulders hunched against the cool spring evening.

The driveway was empty at the house on Pound Street, but the lights were on and the door was open. Michael came in, banging the screen door. The roommate was watering plants, with the television on. "Hullo!" he said. "Everyone's gone to the store, soon to return. You missed dinner."

"That's O.K. I had some at a friend's house."

"Anything good?"

"The company, at least. An old girlfriend who had me do the cooking."

"She's brave, isn't she?"

"No—just busy. She was drawing up a project for deadline."

"Oh? What sort of project?"

"Architecture. She has Dr. Ziplock, you know, and he'll never take a late—"

"Project. So do I, only I finished mine early last night. What's her name? I bet I know her."

"Her name is Julie Malmud, and I don't think you do. So you're in architecture, huh?"

"Julie Malmud? Really! I wish I did, but I don't know how to go about it. I always catch her looking at me, and I'd like to know—"

"So you're in architecture, huh?"

"That's right, architecture."

"Do you like it?"

"Well, I've always wanted to do buildings, but it's not quite like I thought—"

"It wasn't for me either—"

"So I'm taking a course in design—"

"But then, neither was design—"

"So I'm a little worried, and I'm playing with the idea of journalism—"

"And then journalism was a big mistake—"

"And if that doesn't do it—well it might sound funny, but I want to try myself at—"

"And I almost gave up until I finally went into—"

"ACTING!" They practically yelled the word simultaneously and it clattered around the room like a prop falling off a stage into an awful silence. They had been staring each other full in the face for the last several minutes, and the conversation had suddenly raced out of control. The roommate had long since abandoned the plants, and the watering can hung forgotten in his hand.

"You're dripping," Michael DeLoche pointed out and plopped down on the couch to stare hard at the television. The roommate took the watering can into the kitchen, and when he returned he carried two bottles of beer and gave one to Michael. Then he took out a cigarette and when he lit it Michael saw that he used a gemstone silver lighter like the one he had picked up in Key West last summer. He felt his pocket and found his depressingly intact.

"Cigarette?" asked the roommate.

"No thanks, I don't smoke," Michael said. A flat-out lie.

"I'm thinking of quitting myself," said the roommate. Michael started at that and then laughed. He lit a cigarette. They both laughed. They watched the television.

"There's nothing on," the roommate said after a while. "How about some music?"

"Great," Michael agreed. The roommate went into his bedroom and put on an album. Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars. "Good choice," Michael said. "One of my favorites." He would not let it bother him. What was better than meeting someone with similar musical tastes? They began to talk about music at length, and after a time Michael's sense of despair returned heavily. They agreed on almost everything. Even the bands Michael considered his personal and very eclectically chosen favorites, the roommate was all in favor of. Somewhere in the middle of this discussion Brian and Nancy returned, and Michael felt a sense of relief he did not care to examine.

Things began to go along very well; Nancy had had a good day and wanted to talk about it, and, in the rush of good feeling that always bubbled up from the chemistry of their gathering, Michael felt the tension that had hovered in the room fade away. It was not until much later, when things were very loose and other friends had joined them, that he noticed Nancy staring at him and felt a pang of discomfort. He saw her grab Brian's arm and say something Brian pretended not to understand. She began to laugh. "Hey Michael," she said, "and Michael." Suddenly the attention of everyone in the room was turned upon the two of them. "I've tried not to mention this, but I really can't help it. Can't you see that the two of you, even with your hair cuts, look exactly, positively, undeniably ALIKE?" She collapsed with laughter as if the little secret were so amusing that anyone could see why she'd let it out.

"That's right!" everyone exclaimed. "They do, don't they! Look at them!"

"Of course they do! It's the craziest thing!" Nancy said. "You guys are practically twins. No wonder you've always fit in so well, Michael!"

One fellow, whom Michael hardly knew, took up the game with enthusiasm. "I know. We should call them Michael one and Michael two!"

"That's right!" Nancy said, turning to the roommate. "Michael one—"

"No!" shouted Michael, standing up. "I'm number one! I'm Michael one!" The record ended at precisely that moment, and there was an absurd silence in the room.

Nancy giggled nervously. "Sure, Michael. You're number one. You were here first." Then she looked embarrassed at herself.

Michael's face burned. He went to change the album. The roommate went to the bathroom. There in the bedroom Michael felt suddenly tired and realized what a long day it had been.

"I'm going to bed," he told them, coming out, and they said goodnight.

That night Michael suffered a terrible dream. In it he was sleeping in his old bed in the house, where the roommate now slept, when something woke him—the sound of his

name—and when he lifted his head from the pillow something fell from the darkness onto his face and smothered him, fought him, with claws digging into the sides of his head. He lunged, struggled, shook it free, and then groped for the lamp. It clicked and clicked. Nothing happened. He swung his legs out of bed to go for the lightswitch on the wall and began to bumble through a room that had turned into dangerous, uncharted territory. Then he screamed, for there was no more floor, and he was suffocating in a vacuum in which he knew the pain and hysterical fear of losing his very existence. He struggled and finally reemerged, gasping, on the beach of his bed. "I know who I am," he must have said out loud. "I know who I am." Then it started again, only this time he was in Chicago, walking down a familiar street, and the people he knew were all around him, up above in windows, shouting from doorways, shouting his name. But when he looked in their faces to respond he saw they were not calling to him but to someone else coming up behind him, someone else following right along. It was horrible. When he awoke, astonished to find himself out on the porch with a cold breeze stirring in the bushes, he was trembling.

It had seemed exactly as if it were happening. He rose, with a twinge of trepidation but, finding things normal and sane beneath his feet, began to pace the porch. This was the most unexpected thing that had ever happened to him. Nothing could have prepared him. It seemed—it was almost too bizarre to put into words—but it seemed this new Michael was his living double! A wave of anguish assailed him. He sank onto the couch in despair. A man cannot live in two bodies, he thought. A man could have no peace of mind when there was someone else staking a claim to his identity. Was he jumping to conclusions? He could not bear to go on finding out.

He got up again. It was the stillest hour of night, just before the dawn begins, when the imagination runs wild and the heart is as cold as a tombstone. An idea came to him. He saw himself as a gunslinger, facing the other Michael across a dusty corral with the wind whistling in his ears. "This town ain't big enough for both of us," he said menacingly. CRRAACK! Exactly—or close to it. First he would have a look at his sweetly sleeping victim. He crossed the porch and put his hand on the door, and at the touch of the cold metal he stopped. This was madness. People didn't go to these extremes in the world of his experience. He was overreacting. He sat back down and spent an hour staring dully at the eastern sky, as it began gradually paling to grey. When the birds began to chatter he got beneath the covers and went into a heavy sleep.

Michael DeLoche slept the next day until well past noon. He wanted to be sure everyone was gone from the house before he got up. When the roommate came home at three o'clock, unheard because the television was on in the living room, he found Michael in his bedroom methodically sifting through the contents of his drawers.

He stood in the doorway. "What are you doing?" he asked in a very calm voice. Michael DeLoche looked up, met his eyes, and was equally calm. "That's not an easy question," he said. "But you might say I'm looking for clues." He con-

tinued pawing through the dresser drawers and the roommate noticed that other sections of his room—his closet, his bookshelves, his record collection—had been dismantled and strewn about.

"Clues to what?" he said sharply.

"To this little mystery we've stumbled upon. You see I've noticed—"

"I'll say!"

"That we are very—"

"Very much—"

"ALIKE!" They uttered the word at the same time and glared at each other. Michael DeLoche's hands twitched. The roommate cracked his knuckles.

"Well I—was here—first!" Michael said.

"And now you're gone and I'll be damned if I know what you're doing back!" the roommate responded.

"You've got some nerve!" Michael shouted. "And furthermore, that shirt you're wearing, the faded blue denim with the rip in the shoulder and the hand-done stitching on the pockets, is exactly like the one I used to have and I'd like to know how you can explain—"

"I got it from Brian," the roommate said. "He was wearing it, and I told him I liked it, and he gave it to me. He said it had been yours." He ran his finger down the snaps, peeled off the shirt and handed it to Michael. "Here," he said. "Now can I have my room back, please?"

Michael took the shirt and went into the hallway. Brian's door was open so he tossed it in upon the floor. He had been glad to lose track of that shirt. He was tired of it.

When Michael DeLoche came in that night, it was very

DIRTY MARY

Trash can Mary roams the town.
Shaved head and swollen eyes
In army boots and dead men's clothes.
Just another genius
Consumed by thought.
Withering away from within,
Devoured by eccentricities.

Too-visible is she
With her big-city habits.
The abomination of her town.
Tormented, running
Searching for answers,
Finding only trash.

A freak on show
Rotting in her shell.
To be seen daily,
At any hour,
Pawing through garbage.
In the dogged pursuit
Of the lifestyle
She once abandoned.

—Janis Antonek

late. He had wound up the evening by going to see Julie Malmud, and now he felt that there was nothing left to say or do. He wanted to leave very badly. He collected his things and then went into the kitchen and wrote Brian and Nancy a note thanking them for their hospitality and pledging his eternal friendship. He left the note on the kitchen table. The house was very still and dark, and he moved through the rooms, murmuring sad goodbyes to all that had transpired there. As he moved toward the door, the streetlight shining in the front window cast his shadow on the wall beside him, and, seeing it, he had a thought.

He went down the hall into his old room and woke the new Michael gently. "Michael, it's me," he said. "Tell me how you spell your name."

"My name? Which one?"

"Your first name."

"M-I-C-H-E-A-L."

"E-A-L?"

"Yeah, why?"

"Nothing. Never mind." Michael said goodnight. He stepped into the hallway. E-A-L! And he spelled his A-E-L! So that was it! It was going to be all right! He should have known he would find an opening. He ran his hands through his hair and shivered. He gathered his things and stole out of the house, stealthily as an Indian brave.

He steered the truck once more through the campus, past the buildings with their hilarious spotlit white columns. He would never need to come back. He had a light and singular heart. Michael DeLoche had the world by the tail.

First Place, Sigma Tau Delta Fiction Contest

TINCAN MAN

Digging, searching, yearning,
for the treasure that lies beneath
the muck and refuse cast out
by people in nonchalant houses,
the old man totes his find happily
and clutches the pennies earned
to carry them home to safety
and his bank of jelly jars.

"Ooo! Found me 'nother one!" he says,
and slips it into his garbage bag treasure chest.
He is prominent poverty, and wears it well.
Through misty, half-dead eyes he seeks
his buried treasures (dreams, too)
and doesn't even notice us
watching and
laughing.

—J. Brian Broome

JOAN'S DAUGHTERS

I

After seventeen, schoolgirls are predisposed to curtseying in and out of keyholes. But splayed from Daddy's girl to mothering upon upholstered vinyl in designer-jeans, these charily coy, contortionistic flirts who get it on good faith often convert outside the father's hands or feel their trance ripping expensive seams at their spring dance:

So virgins in tight rags tumble from their carts into the marketplace giggling, "Have a heart."

II

Of course, grinning, bald trustees account for much sexual heresy. At Ephesus the sunrise-seminar on God and man was lauded mightily by the club of four-in-hand. Thus Paul started school, finagled and learned to read while Joan, hamstrung on a back-fence, began to bleed. And publicly, at nineteen, Joan turned from fright that her daughters not pirouette to be polite:

Such virgins in tight rags, tumbling from their carts into the marketplace whining, "Have a heart."

III

Few debutantes or ingenues I've had know the gender of the English tongue. But it's sad so few of Joan's daughters recall that Joan crapped there in her mad square, all alone. Without any elixir, perhaps she tried to slip her rawhide straps before she died—a provincial farmer's girl whose promised prince cursorily answered the prayers she sent:

Poor virgin in odd rags, tumbled from her cart into the marketplace, begging, "Have a heart."

—Jerry Allen

Second Place, Sigma Tau Delta Poetry Contest

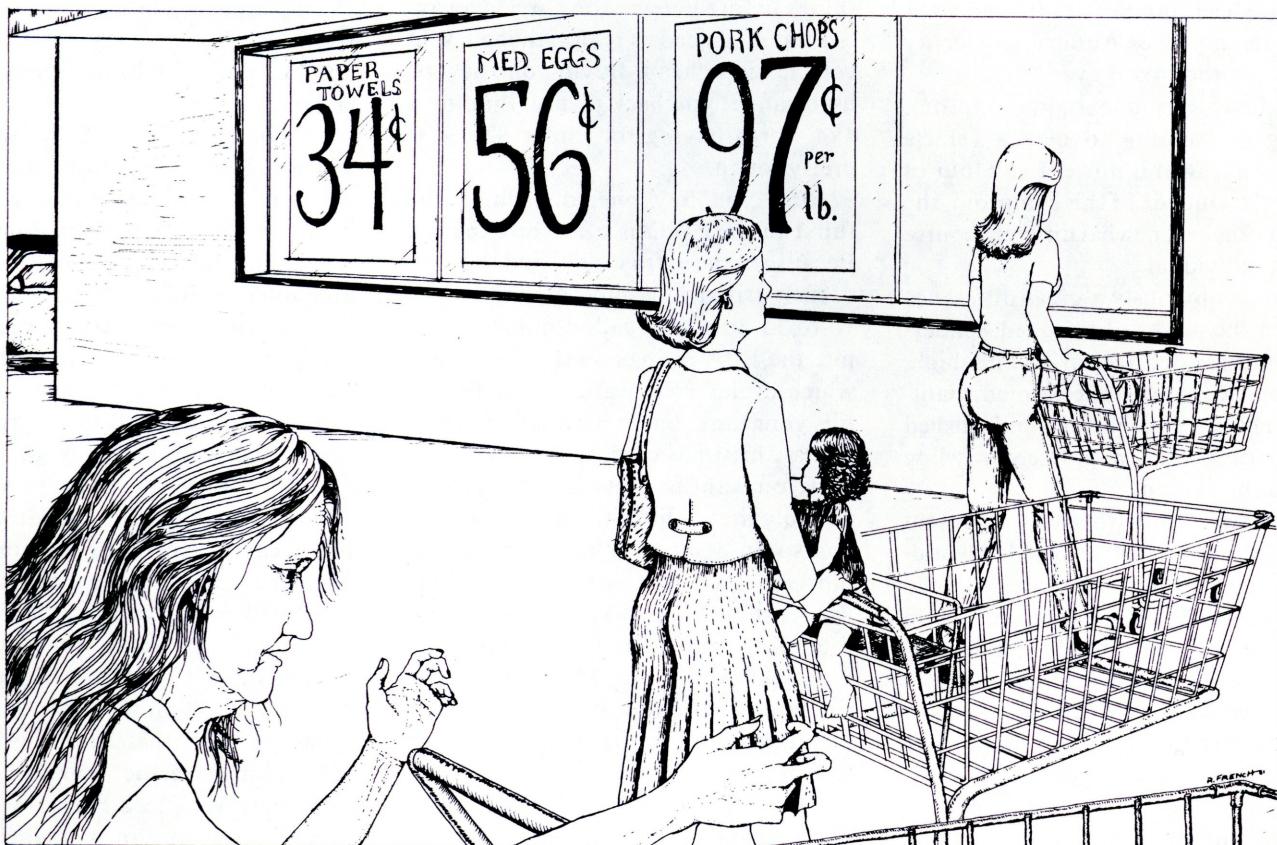


Illustration by Rob French

Hints for Surviving 4x4 Fever

by Dave Neel

These days the streets of Auburn are teeming with nearly every kind of four-wheel drive vehicle known to man. All types of pickups, plus Blazers, Broncos, Ramchargers, Trail Dusters, Wagoneers, Jimmies, Scouts, Jeeps, Land Cruisers, Brats and even a couple of Land Rovers are howling about town on noisy off-road tires, some of which look big enough to have been pilfered from road construction equipment or farm machinery. The sheer number of off-road vehicles in town proves Auburn University has caught the "4x4 Fever."

The fever has one rigid symptom: owning or wanting to own a vehicle which can transmit power to all four of its wheels. Outside of this symptom, the ailment runs a somewhat different course in each individual.

There is obviously a great difference between the driver of a ragged, fender-bent, mud-crusted Jeep and a mile-high, squeaky-clean, two-tone painted, giant-tired, light-covered, chrome-embellished "street truck" you might see prowling around the campus.

These two "four-wheelers" represent philosophical opposites in the 4x4 world. The driver of the dirty, battered Jeep believes a FWD's extra traction should be used, and used hard, in off-road situations. He uses his vehicle to get to an isolated hunting or fishing spot, or just to enjoy the outdoors by heading down a remote and rugged excuse of a road—engaging in mud slingin', hill climbin', rut straddlin', stump jumpin' fun commonly called trail ridin'. Doug Willoughby (03 PB), a Toyota Land Cruiser driver, best sums up this school

of 4x4 thought, answering the question "Why do you drive your truck so hard?" by saying, "That's what it's made for." The 4x4 drivers who seldom stray from the blacktop prefer the gawks that a high-stepping FWD rig can get in town to a dust-eating, paint-scratching, bumbusting jaunt in the boondocks.

If the spring breezes here on the Plains have given you the 4x4 bug for the first time, you need to consider a few things before you get too carried away.

First, you need to realize that a FWD vehicle ain't cheap. Buying one new or used can set you back plenty. Finding a 4x4 worth having for under \$2,000 is pretty tough.

After you buy one, quenching the thirst of an FWD is a major expense. Because of the extra weight and the drag of their drive trains, most 4x4s fall in the 10 to 15 miles per gallon bracket (despite the EPA ratings on the new ones), which drains your wallet faster than it fills your tank, but at least OPEC sends you a Christmas card.

If you want to dress up your vehicle with big tires, a lift kit, wheels, a winch, and so on, your bank account is in for more grief. Off-road tires, for example, can cost well over \$100 apiece, with mounting and balancing usually running you even more. Many types, like the famous Gumbo Mudders, wear so fast they almost print trails of rubber on the highway.

FWD's are rugged and durable, but they demand proper maintenance, which is another expense you have to consider. Keeping your rig in top condition will cost you money, time and effort if you

do it yourself, and more money if you have to pay someone else to do it. If you neglect a 4x4, it will go to pieces on you sooner or later. Fixing a major problem can cost a fortune. One Auburn student had to spend \$1,000 last year on his Blazer's transmission and transfer case after he ignored it for several months. A transmission servicing and an oil change for his transfer case would have been cheap insurance—like the man says, "You can pay me now, or pay me later." If you buy or already have a FWD, don't gamble with its upkeep; you can't afford to.

By now you should be aware that a 4x4 is a luxury for most folks here at Auburn. It costs a heap to buy one, run it and keep it running right. But if knowing all that hasn't cured you of the fever and you're still looking to buy a FWD vehicle, you need to think a few more things through before you get something you don't really want.

Just because you "like" a type of 4x4, don't rush out and buy one. Think about your needs, both present and future. How much luggage do you normally carry? How long do you plan to keep the vehicle? How hard and how often will you drive it off-road? Do you have a boat or a trailer you have to tow? How many miles will you drive it a year? Can you work on the vehicle yourself? Questions like these are important in determining whether you should buy a Jeep-sized vehicle, a Blazer-type truck, a full-size pickup or a smaller import FWD truck.

Perhaps the biggest factor of all is the amount of money you can muster. Mon-

ey and answers to some of the questions above determine whether you're in the market for a new or a used FWD. With most new 4x4s straining toward, and many breaking, the \$10,000 mark, the average Auburnite will probably be looking for a good used FWD.

If you're going to shop for a used 4x4, BE CAREFUL. Do not let a smooth body and a slick paint job fool you. On a FWD it's what you can't see without crawling under the vehicle that counts. The drive train is what you pay the extra bucks for, so make sure it's right. Drive as many different vehicles like the type you want to buy as you can get your hands on. Test driving a FWD will give you a feel for what is right. If you have a friend who knows a lot about cars in general and FWD's in particular, for heaven's sake drag him with you when you go to check out a vehicle you've found in the classified ads or on some used car lot.

When you go, dress sort of grubby, so you can poke around under the vehicle and look a lot under the hood. Ask the seller tons of questions, especially if you're buying from an individual. Have you had any problems with it? Ever gotten it stuck? How does it perform off-road? Has it ever been wrecked? Try to get the owner to open up. Find out all you can about the vehicle's history. Knowing where an FWD has been and how it has been cared for during its life can be very helpful to you.

A good, used FWD vehicle can be a great way to satisfy your 4x4 Fever, but if you choose the wrong thing, you could end up with a mile-long repair bill. Choose a used FWD carefully. Don't wind up paying for someone else's neglect and abuse of a 4x4.

This article isn't meant to scare anybody out of buying a 4x4, just to give him a hint of what he will be getting into if he does buy one. Most FWD's are

good, solid and safe if driven properly and cared for. If you're still serious about checking into FWD's, chances are you have a bad case of the fever, but keep your wits about you, and don't let your emotions get the best of you. Choose the type vehicle that is right for you, then find the best one, new or used. Don't let some silver-tongued salesman sweet talk you into something you don't need or want.

The 4x4 Fever isn't bad at all if you handle it right. Look at all the folks here at Auburn who have fallen prey to the bug. The wildest boonie basher, the smoothest street truck driver and all the off-roaders in between are buzzing through town wearing out expensive tires and guzzling precious fuel—and you know what? They all have big ol' grins spread across their faces!

ASCENDING

I am on the ground
safe.

I am a child, eager and passionate.

You are somewhere in the sky
Towering.

You are a sage, wise and logical.
I want to touch your heart in some way,

But I shy away . . .

I feel inadequate, and I am scared.
Like magnified shadows on the wall
at twilight.

You are complete, and you are sure.
I want to break through the impersonal
shell of yours to see
the person that you are harboring there.

But I shy away . . .

You sit there, listening to the second
side of Rachmaninoff, reeling.
While I am here wishing that the
record will skip so You will think
of imperfection, and perhaps
of me,

The record skips, but
I shy away . . .

Will you not teach me of your gained insight
ONLY?

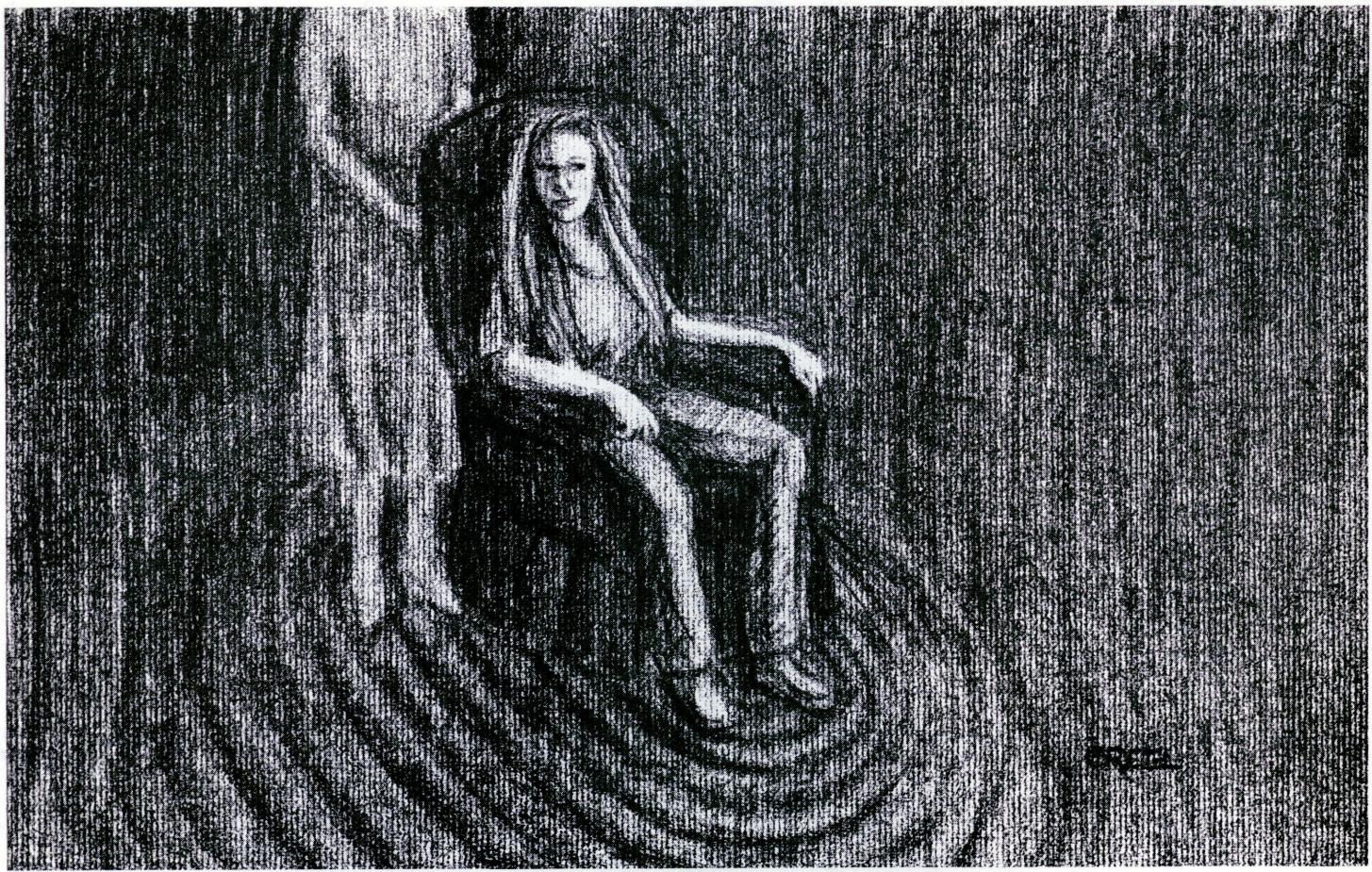
You were at the root of D.H.'s discovery
about women, but YOU will not even
attempt to discover me. Surely,
Life can be discovered by the likes of You.
Please, don't let me shy away . . .

I watch You from ground level in awe
and wonderment, waiting,
I am alone, and,
I am vulnerable.
I shy away . . .

My feet are planted precariously in the
earth, while my head and my heart are
soaring in the clouds just to
be near You.

Why do You amaze me so?
The plane is beginning to board
now,
Do I shy away? . . .

—Leslie Hooton



The Funeral

by P. S. O'Gwynn

Traveling from Greenville, S.C. to Lewistown, Pa. had been a strain. The scenery—an infinite series of vertical forms (trees, telephone poles, high rises)—muffled in thick gray clouds and blurred by a misty rain was colorless and oppressive. Penetrating physical boundaries, the gloom left Maggie awkward with lethargy. It was fifty-five degrees and too cool to open the windows; the air in the car was stale with cigarette smoke. Once, in an attempt to cut through the clouds, the smoke, the silence, she reached for the radio, but her father stayed the gesture with uncharacteristic harshness. A deeper silence resulted, and they continued on their way.

It was midnight before Maggie and her father reached Aunt Kate's house, but as soon as their tires crunched onto the gravel driveway, Maggie's aunt appeared at the door in greeting. Her hair was completely gray and sparser than it had been four years ago—the last time Maggie had seen her. Maggie noticed, as she hugged her, that the skin on Aunt Kate's arms was loose and dry, and she wondered that her aunt had aged so much more quickly than her father who was only two years her junior. But then she remembered that it was with her aunt, not with her father, that Grandad had lived for the past ten years.

Grandad hadn't wanted to live with Aunt Kate, but she

had insisted that she would enjoy the company, that her life as an old maid school teacher (her own description of herself) left her feeling lonely at times. Indeed, it seemed to Maggie that her aunt treated Grandad more like her child than like her father. This attitude became more and more acceptable as Grandad slowly lost his mind to senility and then, quite suddenly last spring, lost his physical strength and control to a stroke. If Aunt Kate's hair were gray, there was good reason; and, if it were sparser, there was no one who would blame her if she had pulled it out herself.

Aunt Kate and Maggie's father walked, arms around each other's waists, into the house, and Maggie followed. The house was unchanged—unchanged except that Grandad's easy chair was empty and the towels that had always covered its cushion had been removed. No one sat there, but it was the focus of all their eyes, and the word "gone" rattled in Maggie's head like a lone marble in a can.

"Maggie dear, please sit in your grandfather's chair. It's too sad to see it empty." Maggie did as her aunt asked, but she felt sacrilegious and wished Aunt Kate had sat in it herself.

Her father began talking about the funeral—what arrangements had been made, what needed yet to be done, who was coming—but Maggie didn't listen. She was remem-

Illustration by Candy Creel

have. She likes her independence. That was another reason Grandad was so hard for her to keep. She couldn't go to the grocery store without getting a nurse or a sitter. I don't know, maybe it would have been more fair to Aunt Kate if you had put Grandad in a home five years ago."

Her father stood up and planted both feet in front of Maggie. "How can you suggest that? It's you who belittles your aunt, not me. You imply that a nursing home could have provided better care for him than she did."

"I'm saying that Grandaddy wouldn't have known the difference and that Aunt Kate suffered too long for too little reason." Maggie was trying to speak in a rational tone, but her voice kept squeaking, betraying her fear at disagreeing with her father.

"Do you think you can solve problems that easily? Wait until you're faced with an adult problem, then you'll drop your simplistic attitudes and begin thinking like an adult. Now, for God's sake, get out of that skimpy dress and put on something suitable for a funeral home." He left the room.

Maggie raged into her bedroom, rehashed the dialogue and composed scathing retorts that she wished she had thought up sooner. She decided not to change her clothes, but at the last minute pulled a dark brown skirt from her suitcase, cursing at her capacity for feeling guilt. She was not happy.

When Maggie walked through the door into the red carpeted decorum of the funeral home, she forgot her father and her aunt. Her eyes scanned the scene, her dread of the day deepening with every new detail. The flowers, bright like painted whores, leaning over her grandfather's remains, seemed to entice him to join in their lusty celebration of life, to laugh cruelly at his impotence. It was as if she had walked in to the theater in time for the last act. The hero was dead, but she didn't know how he had become that way, just that he was indisputably dead. The audience, bored by the lack of action, turned from the stage and became actors themselves, each with a different script. The result was chaos. Unanswered questions, unspoken assumptions, misunderstood actions butted rudely against each other.

"The flowers are lovely. The white potted azalea is mine—the one I sent." The woman, fliching her ashes at an artificial palm tree, was one of Aunt Kate's acquaintances.

Although slightly dazed, Aunt Kate knew by instinct what words and gestures fit the occasion. "Yes, the flowers. Thank you."

"Maggie doll, give Uncle Joe a big kiss. You're such a pretty thing. Last time I saw you, at your dear mama's funeral I think it was, you had braces on your teeth." He drifted away after getting his kiss.

"I remember how your grandfather cared for my father when he had cancer. He was a fine man."

"A fine man, a fine man. Give Uncle Joe a big . . . the last time I saw your grandfather was in . . . the flowers are beautiful . . . your dear mama's funeral, such a pretty thing." To regain her equilibrium, Maggie focused her eyes and thoughts on her father. He was standing in front of the coffin, one hand on his father's folded hands, the other behind his back. The tears in Maggie's eyes redefined the

lines of the perpendicular figures, and for a moment she thought it was her father in the casket, not her grandfather. The pressure building in her chest promised to explode in another minute but was instantly dispelled at the sound of Jane's voice behind her. Jane looked beautiful and confident, and Maggie grabbed her big sister and hugged her until they began emitting breathless laughs and had to adjust their skirts.

"You look great, Cutie." Jane gave her sister one more quick hug. "I hate to feel so happy standing in a funeral home, but I swear, it's wonderful to see you."

"It's good to see you too, Janie. Let's go out in the hall and talk." They sat down in two chairs placed in the hallway. Maggie gave Jane a summary of the events of the past two days, including the morning's argument.

"Dad did seem kind of gruff when I talked to him. I can't believe he flew off the handle just at the mention of a nursing home. Doesn't sound like him at all."

"No, it isn't like him. Ever since Mom died, we've been real close."

"Well, he has a right to lose his temper, I guess—having lost his wife and his father within four years. I'm just sorry you have to bear the brunt of it."

"As long as that's all it is, I'm not worried." Maggie glanced around the hall, her eyes falling on a vase of plastic ferns sitting on a wooden table in front of heavy gilt-framed mirror. "I hate funeral homes. They remind me too much of Mama's funeral. So morbid."

"I agree. Now I'll have to fight through the mental image of Grandaddy as he is in there," she indicated the room where their grandfather was laid out, "just to remember how he looked when he was alive. Dear Grandaddy. I'll miss him." Her face took on a sad expression, and she began to play nervously with her hair. Then she turned toward Maggie with a smile of reminiscence. "Remember the time you climbed up on Grandad's lap and pulled his beard? You pulled it so hard he jumped out of his seat, and you landed 'boom' on the floor. I'll never forget how you looked up at him with big eyes, as if you weren't sure if you should cry or beg forgiveness. Grandaddy stood there looking down at you sprawled out on the floor—silent, like you never had been before—and started to laugh so hard the whole family had to join in. Mama laughed until she cried."

Maggie remembered that day, and, as she thought about it, a sense of the absurdity of family humor possessed her, and she began to chuckle. Then Jane began to laugh, and in a moment they were both gulping, spitting balloons of laughter that, when they burst, released blasts of hot tension.

Then their father was in the hallway. When he spoke, it was with strained control. "I think you girls would do well to give more attention to the fine people who are here to pay their respects to your grandfather." He left.

"He makes me feel like I'm ten years old again." The corners of Jane's mouth turned down.

"This is ridiculous. Everything I say and do is disrespectful of the dead. Do you think he wants me to wear black and wail in the aisles? I don't know, maybe I should talk to him."

bering the summer she had spent with Aunt Kate after her mother had died. Her father had sent her to stay with her aunt so she wouldn't have to spend the summer alone in the apartment while he was at work. Aunt Kate was glad to have Maggie there to keep her company and to help watch after Grandad, who had been living with her for almost six years already.

Now, whenever Maggie thought of her grandfather, she saw his face contorted with the frantic confusion of senility—eyes blinking and tearing, his jaws moving nervously up and down—as he tried to figure out why he could not go back to his farm or why everyone kept telling him his beloved wife was dead. One day he had crept out of the house and wandered a mile down the road searching for the past. A neighbor had brought him back, but for one hour Aunt Kate and Maggie had been consumed with worry. When Maggie went home after the summer was over, she told her father about the peculiar things Grandad did, but he dismissed her stories as gross exaggerations and even reprimanded her for speaking in such a disrespectful way about her grandfather.

Maggie returned to the present when her aunt mentioned that Jane, her sister, was flying in from California in the morning. "She said that Charlie can't come because of some business thing he can't avoid."

"You'd think he would put business aside just once. Jane would probably appreciate his support at this of all times." Her father shook his head.

Aunt Kate's gentle face frowned at this hint of intolerance. "I'm sure he would come if Jane really needed him to. Anyway, she will catch a taxi at the airport and come straight to the funeral home at about eleven or twelve tomorrow."

The thought of the reunion excited Maggie. "It will be great to see her. Do you realize it's been a year since we've seen each other?"

"It's been even longer since she has seen her grandfather." Her Father's face, assuming its "this is a time of mourning" expression, squelched her enthusiasm. Breaking the tension, Aunt Kate, in her usual good sense, suggested bed, and within twenty minutes the house was dark and pretending to be peaceful.

In her bed, Maggie tried hard to remember her grandfather as he was before he became senile, but all she could remember were his hands constantly groping for a crumpled Kleenex, a cookie or a warm hand—groping, like a man surrounded by swells of sea water, drowning. As she grew sleepier, Maggie imagined that her grandfather's spirit was in the room with her restlessly searching under the dresser, the rug, behind the mirror, trying to find peace. But she quickly dismissed her absurd imaginings as the result of fatigue and settled deep into the covers, falling asleep.

Maggie woke with the morning sun on her face, and as she stretched and rolled under the warm covers and bright yellow light, she felt relaxed and reassured. Surely her father would also be feeling better today and would regain, at least partially, his good humor. She began to dress and, as she pulled on her panty hose, listened to her dad and her aunt

chatting in the kitchen.

"Kate, how are you feeling these days? This last year must have been rough, and I'm afraid I wasn't help to you down in South Carolina. Should I have called more often?"

"Daddy wouldn't have known you if you had called, Dan. He needed day-to-day feedings, baths, bed changes, not phone calls. The nurse was helpful. I couldn't have afforded her without your monthly checks." Maggie sensed irritability behind her words, unusual in a lady who was forever patient, and listened more intently.

"You don't think we should have put him in a nursing home, do you?" Her father didn't give Aunt Kate a chance to answer but continued in a disgusted voice. "Those places don't hire good help. The idea of some biddy nurse abusing Dad turns my stomach. I'm glad he was never subjected to that." He spoke with pride, and Maggie wondered if Aunt Kate also regarded the old-age home as evil or if she had sometimes been tempted to take the option and regain her freedom.

"I'm not young anymore, Dan. My arthritis has been flaring up a lot lately. One day when it was particularly bad, Dad knocked his tea over into his dinner plate. Of course, the meal was ruined, so I fixed him another. No sooner had I set the plate down in front of him than it happened again. It was an accident. The stroke made him clumsy, but I just couldn't stop myself from grabbing his hand and beating it against the table. Not hard, but you should have seen the look on his face. I'm still horrified thinking about it." Her words were garbled, and Maggie knew she was crying.

"Kate, you've worked hard. You should feel proud. Because of you, Dad died at home with family and not alone in some institution."

"I'm not proud. I'm tired!" Her heels clicked into the bedroom, and the door shut.

Maggie wasn't anxious to leave her room, but even it seemed less warm than it had earlier. So she forced herself to go into the kitchen. Opting for little girl cheerfulness, she kissed the top of her father's bald head—the spot equidistant from his ears, which she had christened the center of the universe years ago when she was in junior high. "How's the universe today, Dad?"

"Your aunt is upset," he said, ignoring their favorite private joke., "Do the dishes for her, will you?"

"Sure. I heard you talking while I was in the bedroom. I guess Auntie had a hard time of it. Grandad wasn't easy to take care of. I'll never forget that day he snuck out of the house—"

"Is that the way you choose to speak about your dead granddaddy?" He sounded angry and a little bit hurt. "Your grandfather was a man of dignity, and he certainly never 'snuck' anywhere. Your aunt is simply upset with his passing, as is to be expected." He sat back in his chair, his face relaxing. "But she has aged. That's what comes from living without a spouse. Why, I aged ten years the day your mother died. He put his hand flat on the table with a smart slap. "And that's your aunt's problem. She needs a husband."

Maggie looked at him incredulously. "How can you dismiss her feelings like that? If she wanted to marry, she would

"That would be the best thing, if you have the nerve." Jane had never been able to talk to her father like Maggie could, and she admired her sister for her ability to stand up to him in spite of his tendency to use his loud voice as a tool of intimidation.

Maggie stood up, pushing her long blond hair back from her face. Then she left Jane and caught up with her father in front of the men's room. "Dad, Jane and I haven't seen each other for a year. Why do you object to our visiting for a minute in the hallway?" She wasn't as used to confronting her father as Jane thought; she stood hugging her arms against her ribs, staring at her father's elbow.

He looked at her hard, his face red and his eyes twitching. "Is that how you're going to act at my funeral—laughing in the vestibule while I'm laid out in the next room? The young despise the old."

Maggie remembered her vision of him in a casket and felt the pressure start to build in her chest again. "You're not old. How can you think I would—"

"What will you do with me if my mind and body fall apart in twenty years? Throw me in a stinking institution with a bunch of crazies? I'm so angry with you, I could spit." And, indeed, he was so angry he forgot to raise his voice and hissed instead.

"I'll take care of you when you're old. Of course I will. I'll take care of you, just like I did when Mama died."

"You'll take care of me. What does that mean? You would put your grandfather in a home. What's to keep you from putting me in one?"

"I was only thinking about Aunt Kate when I said that." Her eyes were red, and she was hiccupping like a child.

"Aunt Kate won't be alive to take care of me when I'm old, Maggie. You'll have to, or no one will." He was holding onto her shoulders, gently shaking her. "Promise me you'll never put me away in one of those places. Promise me."

"I won't Daddy. I won't."

Her father grew kind again and gave Maggie a hug. "Stop crying, sweetheart." He ruffled her hair and hooked her head under his arm and held it against his chest. "Let's go back in the room. People are probably wondering where we are." They walked back in silence.

Maggie, feeling drained and unsteady, looked around the room for a chair. She saw an empty one next to her aunt and started toward it. But the sight of Aunt Kate bent over in her chair looking like a small heap of black cloth reminded her too much of the trauma her aunt had endured—of the trauma she might one day have to endure for her father. She decided to sit down next to Uncle Joe.



"HOTLANTA"

 Momma woulda tanned my hide last night had she known.
 Dancing in between cokeheads and queers in a hell hole in Hotlanta,
 Women dressed in furs and feathers,
 Hissed us, kissed us by
 Into a spacious scream of human hubub of
 Sweating flesh and faces painted.

 Music, strong enough to pull you down into the floor,
 Lights, assaulting, sparkling . . . blinking on, winking off.
 Feelings, dreams shot hot through me.

 Dangerous eyes stabbed in the haze.

 On the dance floor, one for every kind.
 This with that and Black with white.
 Two Izod guys in plain levis with lovely eyes.
 Mild ones lit up,
 Wild ones sniffed up
 White, from crystal vials and long-nailed pinkies.

 We watched wide-eyed
 The guilty children shine their hineys and
 Snip their shoulder straps,
 Until my small-town morality could stand no more.

—Beth J. Dees

Honorable Mention, Sigma Tau Delta Poetry Contest

THE RETURN

Call them cougar, puma, catamount or mountain lion, they are coming back now, Hikers in South Alabama have sighted signs—the predatory track in mud, the half-devoured deer beside the path, bloodstains on the broken stones.

Scoff and call them ghosts: the big cats prowl. Pine needles divide the sunlight into splinters. They raise green eyes from the shallow stream's dazzle. Grace again moves hungry in the brush. A pattern is reborn.

They have not fallen from the moon, sprung like shadows from the sparse light nor hibernated close to the naked bone. Where the red foxes still race and sly coons forage by dark, their white fangs blaze again.

Already sportsmen want to backtrack the spoor to unbelievable lairs, perhaps Chickasaw burial caves where, wall drawings preserve in silhouette, the beautiful free beasts rendered by one lost in worship.

Already wildlife magazines send teams of observers to pour plaster in tracks,

examine every tree scored by claws sharpening for survival. The public waits, half breathlessly, for news. This is the threshold of miracle.

Yet the spirits reserve their one gift, a verifiable sighting, evidence rising to say the extinct come again, griefless, forgiving, transcending twilight in perfection of gesture, the rhythm insuring breath lasts.

Yet I would not wish to surprise one tearing meat from a flank or dozing tawny on sunlit cliff crags, even from safety. I prefer the myths hidden in a sharp eye's deep corner, the thicket of memory.

I love them best unseen, gliding through deep weeds, vanishing quickly in a whisper of dry leaves, that I may only dream their existence, believe that I may come back in such form, that I, too, may return and thrive.

—R. T. Smith



Lithograph by Rick Smith

SONGS OF THE VAMPIRE'S LOVER

I.

I wait,
It is hot
My hand on the warm window
The dust devils below
Heat shimmer,
Hurry Sundown.

I wait,
In the heat of my room
That scents of you
Outside, the earth cracks
Grass wilts,
Hurry Sundown.

I wait,
For your cold ice eyes
Cold hands on mine
Cold lips on mine
Taking me into the Arctic night,
Hurry Sundown.

I wait,
While the sun moves closer
Closer still to the ground
My dress loosened
I wait,
For sundown
And your bidding,
Hurry . . .
Sundown!

II.

Red polish I wear
Like the blood you love,
A garnet glitter
In the glint of the moon,
Droplets that lie on the flesh of my throat—
A place you love to kiss.

Red satin I wear
Like the blood you love,
Skin flushed
Under the slide of the gown,
Scarlet that gleams in the pale star-light—
a color you long to feel

III.

I sink with gladness
Into your night-caped arms,
The endless day
Forgotten.

But over your shoulder,
I see tomorrow—
Bright and empty,
Just before
The touch of your red silk lips.

Too quickly,
Too soon,
And you, man-yet-not,
Are gone,
Again,
Moonlight flashing as you wipe your mouth.

IV.

The bloody sky
Drips in the window,
Staining the sheets,
And me.

Alone,
Another day and night
Between us.
Are you the dream
Of my desire,
Or its reality?

Sore
and sick, with the knowledge
That even with my heart wrung
Of its life-blood,
I will wait
For you,
For tonight,
Forever.

So I plead,
Silently,
For it hurts to talk,
To the slowly healing sun—
Hurry!
Dear God in Heaven
And you saints in Hell
Hurry!
Hurry Sundown.

—Alicia Smith

Honorable Mention, Sigma Tau Delta Poetry Contest

“Nowhere Else but Auburn”

by Beth Holman

When a student hears, “Nowhere else but Auburn,” his mind instantly forms a picture of what the university means to him. Perhaps he thinks of the Concourse, Bessie the Cow, Sani-Flush or “the free movie experience.”

Chances are, Auburn has been in this fellow’s blood for generations. His father and his grandfather probably cheered, “Nowhere else but A.P.I.” His great-grandfather may well have rallied the troops with “Nowhere else but East Alabama Male College.” These mottoes, not so familiar to students today, nevertheless provide a picture of pride in a school whose history is filled with tradition, as well as transition.

In 1897, the senior class of East Alabama Male College compiled the institution’s first yearbook. The ’97 graduates prided themselves on standing together as “forty-nine as true and loyal members as ever composed a class.”

This yearbook’s list of clubs, which is lengthy for such a small college, reveals evidence for posterity of the studious attitudes of the underclassmen.

The well-to-do men joined the Junior Colillion Club and the Ancient and Independent Order of the Sons of Rest. Records show that two members were dismissed from the latter group—one was “suspended for being too lazy to come to the semi-annual meeting,” while another was “expelled for being so lazy his digestion wouldn’t work.”

The most well-rounded group became the Fat Men’s Club, whose motto read, “O that this too, too solid flesh would melt.”

However, two societies far surpassed the others in popularity. The Order of Female Worshipers claimed, “ ‘Tis the sad, sad fight of a cadet’s heart/To meet, to love, and then to part.” The Auburn Beer Club listed its membership as “too numerous to get in such a small book.”

The smallest organization, the Married Man’s Club, gave non-bachelors an

opportunity to mix and mingle. The list of officers includes “President Charles Tulane Kidd, Vice President C. Tulane Kidd, and Secretary/Treasurer Charles T. Kidd.” Students eligible for membership were “Chas. Kidd, C. T. Kidd, Tulane Kidd and Kidd, C.T.”

Just as the student body as a whole was small in these early years, so were the individuals. According to the yearbook, “The average Auburn cadet . . . is [in 1897] 5 feet 7½ inches tall, and weighs 144½ pounds. The average co-ed. is 5 feet 3 inches tall, and weighs 109 pounds. . . .” A subsequent increase in the stature of the Auburn student has resulted probably because of the increasing popularity of exercising and because of good nutrition, infallibly practiced in each of the university’s unique dining establishments.

At the turn of the century, Alabama Polytechnic Institute was growing in size, as well as in reputation. The great ambitions of graduating seniors accounted for the strengthening of this intellectual haven. The goal of the A.P.I. man, in fact, was “to marry rich or to live without working, which terms are synonymous,” according to the 1910 yearbook. By 1923, the *Glomerata* boasts, the senior class had grown to 225 members.

In the ’30s and ’40s, the Depression and the United States’ participation in World War II marred the carefree spirit usually associated with college life. However, Junior Proms (“the highlight of the social season,” according to the 1936 *Glomerata*) brightened the decade. Also, Rat Day, during which freshmen girls did “menial tasks for upperclassmen,” the installation of candy machines in the dorms, bridge games and Sunrise Dances added new life to the university in the ’40s.

The Tigers bombarded the ’50s, as the football team finished first in the nation in 1957. However, the NCAA, dear to the hearts of War Eagle fans even today,

had bestowed on the A.P.I. athletic department a three-year probation for recruiting violations in 1956, that stopped the Tigers from going to any bowl games resulting from their national championship.

Though the success of the War Eagle football team has not been carried over into the ’80s, the 1958 *Glomerata* illustrates several familiarities. Buttoned-down collars, short hair for guys and pony tails for girls have again become the norm for Auburn students in recent years. Also, Peggy Rodgers, a candidate for Miss Homecoming in 1957, used the campaign slogan, “The ‘eyes’ have it!” which has reappeared recently on the campus.

By 1968, Auburn University began to turn into one of the country’s most liberal institutions. Some of the headlines in that year’s *Glom* reveal startling truths that have changed the course of campus history. “Auburn graduates first Negro student. . . .” “Under Corinne Hamm, AWS allows 21-year-old women to drink and ups freshman curfew to 10:00.” “Dare-devil students . . . romance through computer match-maker.”

Meanwhile, Vietnam shaded the lives of all Auburn students, whether they were for or against the United States’ involvement. The 1968 blood drive took in 4,812 pints of blood, and student groups sent supplies to Vietnamese children.

By the mid-1970s, students, tired of trying to change the political arena of the country, tended to care most about “Number One.” In fact, some students thought so much of themselves that they wanted to let others see how they really were. The height of this feeling was wrapped up in the 1974 *Glomerata*, as follows:

*Faster than a speeding bullet;
More powerful than Dean Cater;
Able to dodge Chief Dawson in a single bound;
Look! on the Concourse! in the Quad!*

It's—the Streaker!

As Auburn University celebrates her 125th Anniversary, most students remain conservative or are moving to the right in their philosophies. Modest fashion still prevails, though the preps have added new colors, such as preposterous pink and glaring green, to the acceptable student uniform.

Recently, the university has experienced several changes. The addition of stadium lights which stay on 24 hours a

day and the requirement that all university matters sent through campus mail be written only on paper marked "Internal Memorandum" exemplify the real concern for efficiency.

On the other hand, there are still dorm mothers available for counseling and encouragement, there is still toilet paper furnished for campus residents, and there is still the opportunity to get rid of it at Toomer's Corner. Yes, Auburn has changed through

the years. Transitions have not always been easy. Some traditions can now be found only in old records, but many have continued. The basic beliefs and values of Auburn students conform to those of their predecessors on the campus, for the most part. And, if *this* tradition continues, "Nowhere else but Auburn" will hold true for their children, as well as it has for them.



Lithograph by Marya Vernon

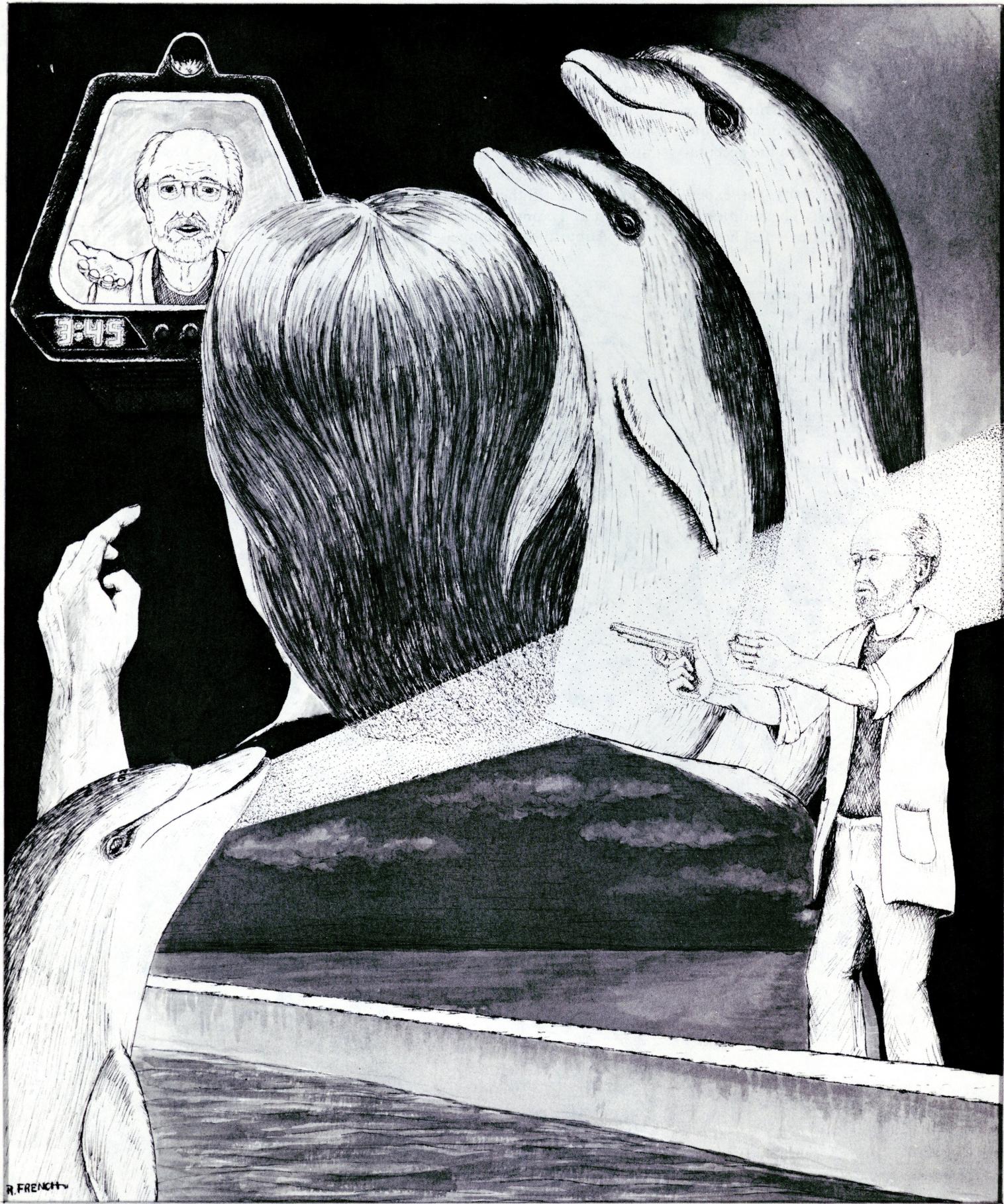


Illustration by Rob French

THE TURSIOPS INCIDENT

by Brian Hughes

Bzzz!

The strident signal of the vidphone pulled me out of a rare sound sleep into total wakefulness. I struggled out of bed, cringing as my feet touched the cold concrete floor of my rented room.

Bzzz!

I could vaguely read 3:45 a.m. on the glowing face of the offensively noisy 'phone's built-in alarm clock. Three steps of freezing misery brought me across the tiny room to the confounded instrument.

Bzzz!

Lighted buttons shone in the cold darkness. Tiredly I slapped at the one marked "Received Call." The red pickup indicator light flashed on.

"Allan?" said a familiar voice. "It's me . . . Ed Parker."

Dr. Edward Parker!

There wasn't a psychologist, behaviorist or marine biologist worth his sheepskin who didn't know about Dr. Parker's phenomenal work with dolphins. My degrees hung on the wall largely because of his help.

The man was famous and highly respected, and I counted myself very lucky to call him my friend. He had arranged a Cooperative Education job for me at his Interspecies Institute. This had enabled me to complete my education to the Ph.D. level, something I could not have done without the financial assistance of a good salary.

He also introduced me to dolphins. I couldn't say which gift of the two I valued the most, the pay or the chance to know these friendly and likeable creatures, without whom my life would have been immeasurably poorer.

In a world seemingly founded on mistrust and betrayal, here were people (and thus did I always think of dolphins) who trusted and loved those who gave them the opportunity. Yet to those who broke that trust, they were unforgiving.

I could not think of Dr. Parker without bringing to mind the sometimes gentle, often rambunctious, but thoroughly enjoyable dolphins, and somehow I knew that they were connected with a late-night call from a man I had not seen in two years.

"Hey, Doc! Long time no see! What you been doing since '92?"

Instantly I regretted my innocent question. Dr. Parker's face set hard as plasteele. His eyes darted around, haunted by something about which I felt it better not to ask. Yet also I knew that *that* was the subject of this communication.

"What happened? Last I heard, you were onto something big. Then I hear absolutely nothing from you until now."

In December of 1992, Dr. Parker had written to me, his letter carrying such an enthusiastic tone as to indicate imminent success. His attempts to teach English to two dolphins had borne fruit in the form of unassailable results. I had been instructed to keep this a secret.

A week later, he sent me a telegram telling me to burn that letter. Out of respect for him, I did so, but it made me wonder what had happened. The telegram said he had suffered a heart attack. Yet I could not reach Dr. Parker by vidphone, telegram or letter. At the time, I took it calmly; I was working on my doctoral thesis, which made me quite busy. Besides, I figured if he wanted to be reclusive, it was his private affair.

"Yes, Allan," he said, almost reluctantly, "I was on to something. It turned out to be bigger than I had believed. There is an aspect of dolphins which is very frightening. I've suppressed the knowledge as long as I could, but now others are taking up the research where I left it. One of them will find what I found, and then . . . what will come? Perhaps it will mean our first war with another intelligent species! *That* can never be permitted!"

I stared at his face in the screen and wondered if Dr. Parker had cracked. *War with dolphins?* The concept was ludicrous. Yet there was something in Dr. Parker's manner which convinced the usually reliable part of my mind which was responsible for intuitive judgements that the man was not insane.

This frankly scared me. I have this freak talent, like ESP but less useful. People call it psychic intuition, which is just a way of saying that they don't understand it. Basically it tells me if something—an equation, a statement, information, etc.—is trustworthy. Now, it was indicating strongly that Dr. Parker was on the level. It can screen even things people believe to be true which actually aren't. (One time this talent got me a "D" in freshman history, which taught me an important lesson: The facts that matter are those the professor believes.)

"Well? What is this facet of dolphins that was so grim it had to be shut up for two years?"

"Not over the 'phone. Can you come to Key West as soon as possible?"

I thought about it. I was learning the hard way that a Ph.D. is *not* a ticket of guaranteed employment. There were many people chasing a few jobs at that time. More than a year of hard work had gotten me precisely nothing. Oh, I wasn't starving. I had bought a lot of gold mining stocks in better times, and they paid nice dividends. In short, there was nothing to keep me from taking a little trip to the Institute.

"Okay, I'll come."

Dr. Parker seemed to collapse in relief.

"I'm glad you can make it. But . . . one warning. *Bring no weapons.* They will do you little good."

"Why?"

"Not over the 'phone, I say! I'll explain it all when you get here."

I wondered about this but said nothing.

"If you can, get down here in five days, before if possible. Time is not unlimited. Goodbye, Allan. I'll be expecting you soon."

The image on the screen vanished in a flare of static as Ed broke the connection from his end.

For a couple of minutes, I sat and watched the early winter lightning as it lit up the room in strobe light flashes. When a light rain started, I turned on the desk light and stared at the trademark on the bulb, thinking.

Ed Parker (I was beginning to think of the man as a peer rather than as a mentor, so I used his first name.) had sincerely believed his warning about weapons to be justified. My mental truthmeter told me it wasn't. What did he fear? I slid open the top drawer of my desk, reached up inside the slide space, and released a hidden catch. The heavy Wildey .45 Magnum hidden there dropped into my hand without a hitch. Maybe Ed was intimidated by somebody or something, but a Wildey in the hands of a capable handgunner was not an encouragement to intimidators of any species. species.

As I stared at the pistol, I felt conflicting emotions concerning the whole affair. I liked dolphins better than I did most humans and had once sworn never to do violence to cetaceans. On the other hand, I wasn't going to be caught with my pants down if I were threatened. After agonizing over the affair for some time, I replaced the pistol in its hideout and went back to bed, trying to forget the disturbing business.

No matter what I tried, I couldn't sleep. Two sleeping pills didn't knock me out. Relaxation exercises only made the impressions stronger. When finally I did get a few minutes of disturbed sleep, dolphins, a male and a female, swam through my dreams. The male had a distinctive crosshatch scar on his melon, the bulging forehead which serves the dolphin as an acoustic lens.

Then I realized I was wide awake . . . and still I could see the two dolphins.

By this time, I had almost given up on sleeping. I found I did not feel tired, yet during the conversation, I was barely able to stay awake. Nor did I feel the pleasant wooziness generally imparted by the sleeping pills.

The alarm clock said 5:48 a.m. I knew what had to be done if ever I wanted to get to the core of the matter. I got out of bed, threw together clean clothes, a shaving kit and several hundred gold dollars. I also recovered the Wildey, smuggled it under my jacket in a shoulder holster and loaded three extra clips in the special pockets provided along with what was left of a 50 round box. Thoroughly prepared, I set the 'phone for recording and locked the door.

Once I got on the freeway, I shut the gas engine off and hooked into the power lane, which fed me all the cheap, fission-produced power I needed. It's sort of strange, but, just a few years ago, this principal was applied only to toys.

The next thing I noticed was the sound of the computer cutoff warning. I unstrapped, took control and got my bearings. Miami was around me. I found the U.S. 1 exit and got off the freeway. At approximately 1:00 p.m., I pulled into the parking lot of the Interspecies Institute in the old

Key West Navy Base.

From the street side the Institute was a monolithic, intimidating structure. Black, synthestone walls were unbroken, except by a stainless steel door under an overhang. Plain brass letters on the door spelled out the name.

I locked my car and walked to the door, noticing the lichens on the walls and the tarnish on the once-bright brass letters. Then it hit me: why was I looking for Ed at his Institute? It wasn't as though I didn't know where else to look; I had fond memories of his old Duval street house. What had prompted me to visit this monument to a man's shattered dream?

Angry at myself for being such an idiot, I pushed the matter aside and halfheartedly pulled at the door handle.

The door was open! Somewhat startled, I opened it all the way and stepped inside. The autocloser shut it behind me.

In the reception room, all the lights were on, but somebody had covered all the furniture except the receptionist's desk. Ed Parker sat there. His face was harder, yet less fear showed than before. My former employer was remembering things that hurt and angered him.

"I've been expecting you, Al. Which doesn't make sense, because you had every right to wait until the last possible minute. C'mon out on the patio, and we'll have a drink."

We walked out into the courtyard. From the inside, the Institute was an entirely different building. The main part was open, a courtyard surrounded by three-story wings in a squared-off U. Enclosed balconies ran around the wings, and there were stairs on either side of the ends facing the harbor. The courtyard was not roofed, even by glass. A series of interconnected pools occupied most of its area. Their sides were raised to knee height, and they were constantly flushed by tidal flow and waves through a channel that led to the harbor. A gate on the ocean side kept out obnoxious forms of marine life, such as the local medusa jellyfish. Electrified metal strips, replaced periodically, discouraged marine growths.

Elevators, designed to hold water, ran from the pools to the floors above. These were designed for dolphin operation.

The setup reflected much thought, with indoor areas for work and equipment which required a controlled environment surrounding a complex where the principal activity was taking place.

Immediately I noticed two things: the gate to the sea had an open padlock of the heavy magnetic key type hanging on it, and there was a large hole in the utility room wall. The hole was big enough for a man to stick his head through, and whatever had made it had knocked the stucco off the wall, revealing the broken cinder block underneath. This hole was new to me. So was the lock.

Ed settled into a battered web chair and waved to another similar chair for me. A table—holding several bottles, a full ice bucket and clean glasses—was between the chairs.

"Have a seat, Al. Rum and Coke?"

"Plenty fine for me. A little on the diluted side; I'd rather go it slow." We shook hands, and I sat down. After a little mixing on Ed's part, I had my drink, which I drank slowly.

"Been a long time, hasn't it, Al? Lots of things have happened, scary things. I can't keep those secrets any longer." He poured himself a stiff belt of straight Myer's Rum and downed it. I was surprised; in the past, Ed had never taken rum straight or fast, and Myer's is powerful stuff.

As I watched, Ed looked at the bottle and said, "Rum helps me ignore the past."

"The way you're going, you'll ruin your liver. Get it off your chest; I can keep my mouth shut."

He sighed, leaned back in his chair and said, "Yes. You're right, of course. I'll tell you; you always had good discretion.

"It all started just after you went back to finish your Ph.D. I had finally rammed through a request for permission to keep two more dolphins. The catch boats brought in a male and a female. They had government cold-brands and numbers, but 0128M and 0579F don't have much character, and, as you know, I thought it vital that my subjects have names. The male had a scar that reminded me of a Japanese temple gate, so I named him Torii. Some wag with more humor than sense called the female Tarii, and, alas, it stuck."

Ed dug a picture out of his wallet, and I thought he'd doped the rum, so devastating to my sensibilities was the shock. These were the dolphins of my dream and vision! Valiantly I mastered myself before I could show my surprise.

Ed took my reaction for something else. "You noticed it," he said. Indeed, when I looked closely at the picture, I saw that these dolphins were different in a way I couldn't define.

"It loses something on film, but the difference is still there. The first time I saw Torii and Tarii, I knew if I ever made the breakthrough, it would be with these two dolphins."

"Did you?" I asked unnecessarily.

"Yes. Torii and Tarii were phenomenal learners. I first saw them in February of '92; by May, they were thoroughly adjusted to the schedule and were starting to learn some basic words.

"By June, they spoke excellent English, although they sounded a little squeaky and hissed their sibilants to some degree.

"I kept this *quiet*; in fact, my only breach of security was that letter to you. Why I wrote it I'll never know; it was just as well that you burned it."

"Your heart attack?"

"A phony." Ed smiled, an expression he seemed to have almost forgotten. He poured himself another depth bomb and freshened my drink as well. "I had to have some excuse to stop research. The symptoms were easily faked.

"Getting back to the pith of the matter, I was overwhelmed with my charges' progress. It took me eight years to learn Spanish, and there are some cognates between it and English. Not so between English and, er, 'dolphinese'. There isn't even a shared racial background. Six months is a short time to learn a totally alien language, even if most of your time is spent on that subject. I was intrigued but didn't really care. My pupils were learning human history.

"Allan, you know my political peculiarities. Many's the time we argued about behind-the-scenes, conspiratorial influences in history. I've regaled you with the story of

Weishaupt's Illuminati and their role in the fall of the French monarchy, as well as the story of the League of Just Men, who backed Karl Marx. And of course there are our present-day organizations like the Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission. These secretive groups were and are a distinctly bad influence, and, as I taught the dolphins, I tended to emphasize them. I spent a fair amount of time on the dictators, too: Napoleon, Lenin, Stalin and the rest of the Soviet cutthroats, Hitler and the bloodiest of all, Chairman Mao. I thought my presentation to be correct, and factually it was.

"Yet I blame that for much of my failure. I presented man in just about the worst light possible, failing to emphasize the importance of the American system of freedom or the Long Shot Rebellion of the Ukraine and the Warsaw Pact. Now the evil in men has been dominant, but so much is good, even so.

"I wanted to know about dolphin history, and Torii was most cooperative. He was one of those people who were charged with retaining the entire known history of dolphin-kind in his memory. With such a teacher, I wondered how I could avoid learning. Yet avoid I did. I felt unable to absorb the underlying *feel* of dolphin culture, such as it was. Torii and I reviewed things for hours, and still things made no sense. This bothered me, for I was fairly certain *I was being understood* and that understanding was being greeted with a good deal of distaste, even contempt.

"My own operation did little to dissuade such attitudes. Torii and Tarii were confined in different pools, adjoined but separated by a gate with a simple bolt latch which they did not have the hands to undo." Ed stopped talking and stared off into nowhere, then glanced momentarily at the hole in the wall. I could tell he was mentally kicking himself to pieces. My truthsense was quiet for now, but I wondered how it had led me astray about the telegram. It *did* indicate that so far Ed had not lied. Paradoxically, it also indicated the correctness of his peculiar version of history.

"I was a fool, a damn stupid fool for not realizing what a mistake that was. I did it without respecting their feelings on the subject.

"*It was* a useful technique. In isolating the dolphins from each other, I was forcing their concentration on me and my program. Even though the behaviorists call it a new idea, it's been in use for thousands of years by such savory groups as the Inquisition, the Nazis and the Communists, who developed it to a high and cruel degree of refinement. It probably predates recorded history, because it's perfect for bending people without damaging them physically."

Ed gazed at the bottom of his glass. "*That* was my big new technique: old-fashioned solitary confinement, with visiting privileges as incentives. Dolphins are highly sexed; they are also mutually interdependent. My program was effective, but I should have been honest with myself and called it 'brainwashing' instead of 'behavior modification.'

"That blasted gate started to get left open quite a bit. I had a word with my staff about the employment benefits of careful work and put a small lock on the gate. Surely the trouble of having to unlock the gate after getting the key

from me would discourage this carelessness.

"It didn't. The lock had a way of getting lost, sprung and otherwise abused. I didn't mention it, but I set up a cot in my office and started sleeping there. Whenever somebody was working late, I popped out at odd intervals to keep them on their toes. That didn't seem to do much good; I never caught anybody, and I was losing sleep. After a few weeks of this nonsense, I got tired of the cot and replaced it with a regular bed. Then I tried that magnetic lock over there. It cost a bundle, but I wanted to put an end to this whole charade.

"The first night I used the new lock, I didn't bother to check. But first thing in the morning, I found Torii and Tarii in the same pool, engaged in very passionate lovemaking, as they had been every night for the past couple of weeks. The gate remained locked, but a wet sling stretcher leaned against the wall. Now occasionally I used sling stretchers to move the dolphins, but they were limited-use equipment and so were stored in the utility room, behind a lot of heavy hardware, very tough to get. Somebody had gone to a lot of trouble to pull off this bit of chicanery.

"Thinking about it disquieted me. I put the stretcher back before the staff got to work and said nothing about the affair.

"The staff was silent and nervous, going about their duties with a minimum of idle conversation—unusual for that group of people. This pattern had come out, now that I thought about it, over the past two weeks. My people were also avoiding Torii and Tarii. This was odd, because all of them enjoyed talking to the dolphins.

"The day went slowly, and my people felt considerable relief at quitting time; they wanted to get out of there. Two of the maintenance men hung around until I asked them what was on their minds. They pushed me into my office and shut the door. Then they talked so fast that their words tripped over each other.

"A circulation pump had quit the day before. Pulling it out for overhaul, then putting it back again, took them until two that morning. They were about to leave, in fact passing by Torii's pool, when he asked them to move Tarii in with him. They tried to slip by, but they couldn't. They went into the utility room, brought out the stretcher and did what Torii wanted.

"'It was some kind of compulsion,' said one. 'We couldn't resist.' They told me if Torii wasn't disposed of, they weren't coming back.

"If a man wants to quit, it's none of my business to dissuade him. I paid them off and let them go. After they had left, I started a report and pondered the situation. These two men were methodical and unimaginative fellows, not inclined to lie or pull practical jokes. Yes, something had scared them badly, and I had a nasty hunch that soon this was going to blow up in my face.

"In typing my report, I made a mistake and went into my top desk drawer to get the correction fluid. The bottle wasn't in its usual place, and I stirred the clutter looking for it. In doing so, I ran across my Smith & Wesson .44 Magnum Stainless. Finally, I found the correction fluid, used it and put it back. Again I saw the pistol. This time I took it out and

stuck it in my belt. The employees knew I kept it there and also knew how to use it. If somebody got scared, I didn't want him or her running amok with that cannon.

"I finished the report, read it and read those I had made over the last few days. I thought about it and read them again. Reluctantly, I decided to confront the dolphins. By now it was almost dark, being late in the year."

"You've lost me," I said. "Last time you mentioned dates, you were only up to June."

"I'm sorry. I spent the six months in question on history, after I was able to converse with Torii and Tarii."

My truthsense didn't complain.

"That is one date I'll never forget: December 20, 1992. Just a week after I sent you that optimistic letter, all my dreams, all my work, was undone, by my own stupidity."

I took a sneaking look at my watch. Today was December 20, 1994.

Ed continued his story with a crack in his voice.

"When I walked out to the pool, I felt more and more apprehensive. Was I chasing shadows, or something new and dangerously real. Half afraid I was wasting time—and half afraid I wasn't—I bent down and rapped on the side of Torii's pool.

"Torii came to the signal. 'You of me wished something?' he asked.

"'Yes, Torii. I want to know what in the hell this compulsion business is. Furthermore, I want it to stop!'

"Torii came back very angry. 'Edward, far enough has gone the matter.' His sentence structure became scrambled when he was upset. 'I am displeased with this penning me up as are lesser animals penned. To Tarii and me intolerable has it become. Demand we that this be changed.'

"I reminded Torii with considerable force that it was my intention to stop this psychic compulsion and that he was *not* to juggle things to accommodate his love life.

"His voice dropped lower than I had ever heard it before, and his grammar straightened up. 'That is a mistake on your part, Edward. We would prefer your cooperation, but it is not absolutely necessary. *Open that gate.*'

"'No!' I said, giving that word all the emphasis it could support. 'I will not be threatened, Torii, nor will you force me to do anything against my will!' My fear, by now very real, crept into my voice.

"'Defiance is impossible,' Tarii said, shifting my attention. 'We will let you have one chance to open the gate voluntarily. If you refuse, Torii shall *compel* you.'

"I didn't answer, merely planted myself. Then the force hit me. I could feel it pulling at my muscles, and this scared me to the core.

"But as I made an involuntary move toward the gate, the .44 Magnum shifted position. I then broke the most solemn oath I had ever taken—that I would never harm a dolphin or even consider doing so. Fear had driven this from my mind, and instinctively I whipped it out of my waistband, aligning the glowing night sight solidly with Torii's head.

"Torii was caught off his guard . . . but not quite. When he saw the heavy pistol aimed right at him, he launched a desperate mental attack which stopped my finger almost at

the trip point. By the mental skin of my teeth, I clung to my willpower and forced the unruly finger to tighten on the trigger. Assault after assault hit my consciousness, but I held the compression. My whole body shook from the effort; I could barely keep the sights aligned.

"I'll put steel jacketed lead in your brain, you bastard!" I said with savage determination. "Compel me, will you? Try to compel a bullet to stop before it blasts your head apart!"

I fought for every fraction of a gram of pressure, and slowly it became evident that I was winning. Torii was fighting for control with the desperation of an intelligent being faced with imminent destruction, for he knew he would not be able to stop or dodge the heavy Magnum slug once the trigger released the hammer.

"For a length of time which felt like eternity, but I suspect was only a minute, I continued to gain pressure gram by gram as Torii's resistance weakened. He and I both knew he would fail to hold me and in failing die. Yet dolphins love life deeply, more deeply than men do, and he tried valiantly to force me to release my finger.

"Even so, his control slipped, a fraction at a time until it broke completely. My finger, released from resistance, clamped the trigger back to the stop.

"But then I realized I did not want to kill Torii; he had not hurt me, nor had he succeeded in controlling me. Desperately I pulled the gun up, just as the hammer fell.

"Fire roared out of the muzzle, but I had been fast enough; the slug hit the utility room wall and made that hole. Then I looked at Torii. For a long instant our eyes locked gaze. Yet between us there was no hate, no rancor, only regret for what might have been.

"Keeping that precious contact, I slipped the magnetically coded key into its slot in the hated lock, which clocked open. I removed it and opened the gates, including the one to the sea.

"'Go freely,' I said to them. 'Remember, though, the gate will never be closed to you.'

"They did not reply but swam through the gate. In an instant they were gone, and I couldn't see them anymore.

"What's left to tell isn't much. I shut down and arranged that fake heart attack. It almost killed me. The staff was relieved to be unemployed. The other dolphins, who spoke no English, I released. But what does all the blasted gold in the world do to repair the damage I did with the dolphins? Nothing! Now other researchers are following up on my work. Somebody is going to run against what I found. Maybe he'll shoot, maybe he won't. Either way, it means the first interspecies war . . . and *I'm* responsible!"

My truthsense didn't bobble. I didn't need it to tell me that I had heard the true story of the demise of the Interspecies Institute.

Ed didn't bother to fill his glass; he just upended the bottle and took a long pull. I maintained an uncomfortable silence, then downed what remained of my drink. Then, unable to watch a great man acting like a corner drunk, I looked out over the harbor and watched the little waves sparkling in the late afternoon sun. I felt numb and sad with the shock of the truth. Yet *something* told me: "This story remains unfin-

ished; there is hope still."

Was there anything for which to hope? The sun-dappled sea held my idle attention. Suddenly, I sat up straight. Was there a minor variation in the pattern of sun on water? I strained to see. Yes! Something was cutting across the wave-line. Not a ship, for I could see only the disturbance. A wild surmise formed in my mind . . . and my truthsense sang out to confirm it! No, that was impossible. It could only be my desperate hope talking. The dolphins would never come back, not after what had happened.

"—Allan Willis Caynes, your sense of the truth deceives you not. We return to the place of meeting.—"

The words touched us both with a golden wave of reassurance, unspoken yet clearer than speech.

Ed was draining the last dregs of the Myer's bottle. His face assumed a spontaneous, heartfelt grin, and he threw the empty bottle high into the air, smashing it against the second-story balcony. As the shards rained down on the patio, he leaped from his chair and dashed into his office.

I ran for the sea gate. Now I could see the returning dolphins clearly. We reached the gate at the same time. And I was not surprised to recognize these dolphins as being the same ones as were in Ed's picture, as well as in my dream!

I tried to open the gate as fast as I could.

It didn't move! Two years of constant exposure to salt water had left it rusted shut!

What did we need a gate for, anyway? *That* had been decided two years ago today. I snapped into action. The Wildey seemed to leap into my hand as I drew and fired. The big pistol bucked and roared three times, leaving the gate a twisted ruin sinking slowly into the harbor.

I did not notice Ed come up behind me. Then I did notice him . . . and the .44 Magnum in his hand!

Reflexively, I threw my hand out to stop him . . . too late! Ed had stepped around me, drawn back and sent the pistol flying out into the harbor!

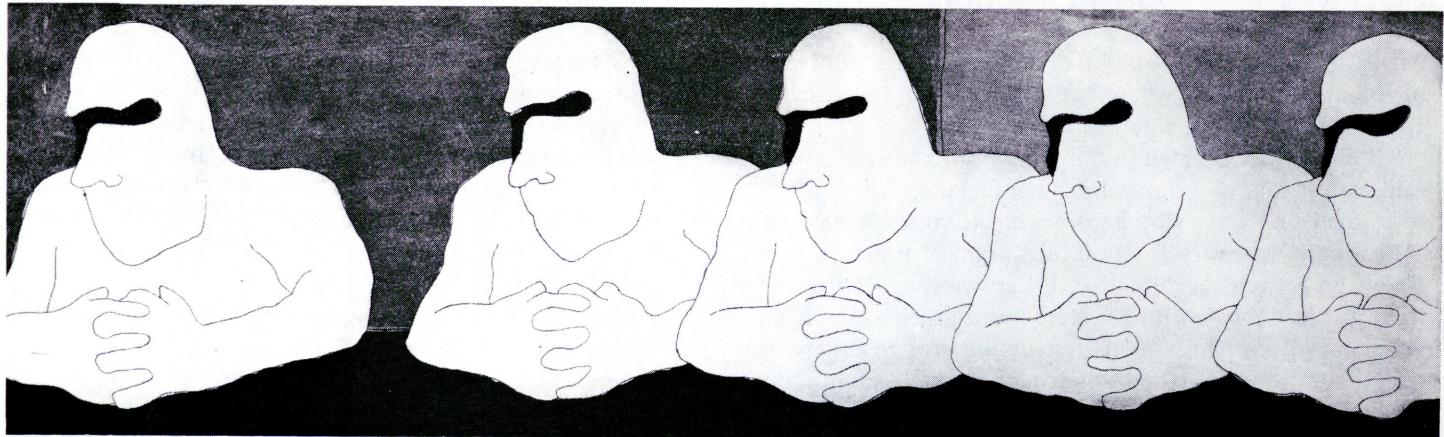
Torii spun end-for-end, streaking out after the spinning gun. Tarii did not enter the compound, instead waiting for him. In half a minute he was back. In his mouth was the weapon, stainless steel gleaming wetly in the light of the setting sun.

"—You did not mean to throw it away, Edward—" Tarii thought. Her mind touch was light, feminine and supportive. "—What you would discard is the cruelty, ignorance and fear with which you associate it. It is only inanimate metal and can be used for good or for ill. It is you who must determine the use.—"

Ed stared at her for a long time. Then he reached down and accepted the pistol from Torii.

"Thank you, Torii," he said. "Thank you, Tarii, for explaining to me a lesson I had forgotten. Thank you, Allan, for being patient with an old man's ramblings. And thank you all for restoring a broken dream." He wiped the Smith & Wesson carefully and stored it in his waistband, after removing the cartridges.





The Worth of One

by Beth J. Dees

As drifting sands form dunes, so individuals form societies. And just as we may look out over the dazzling white contours of land and appreciate only the beauty of the whole landscape, unmindful of the billions of tiny separate particles forming it, we often look upon the total society without realizing the worth of each individual that makes it up.

Groups do fulfill a basic human need; everybody wants to belong. Just look around at the formation of families, country clubs, gangs and church groups. Even those involved in the "do your own thing" movement of the '60s and the "me generation" of the '70s became a part of a group effort. There is nothing wrong with individuals wanting to group—except that it becomes easy and acceptable to follow set patterns, which often means giving up individuality.

Only when we are actively aware and acknowledge the worth of one does a society continue to survive and thrive. Too often an individual is pointed out for his peculiarities in differing from the like-mannered, like-minded group and called eccentric. But who knows that the ugly duckling will not turn out to be the swan, adding charm and grace to an otherwise average pond.

Individualism is not synonymous with selfishness. Rather, it is following the natural bent of one's personality and realizing one's own talents, strengths and limits. Therefore, the better individual makes a better society, not a more selfish one.

The worth of an individual can be compared with the wind. No one really notices when the wind *doesn't* blow; but, without it, ships would not have sailed to discover new worlds, springs breezes would not have refreshed so many souls, and sand dunes would not have formed on shores. Just so, we may not notice when individuality no longer exists; but, without it, there will be no healthy society, no freshness of life, and the dazzling white dunes of society will turn to mud.

GENERA AMORIS

(I)

Little of power have I known or held in hand;
But one young bird, the budding feathers yet unfurled,
Quivers in my palm. Its heart drums wildly—
One thousand beats each moment; in spite of better
principles this mockingchild huddles in the warmth
My cupping fingers offer. As any infant might lie
Sleeping on its mother's breast, so this orphan
Dozes fretfully in my huge, powerful hand.

(II)

Thunder and inky rain puzzle and amaze me;
Mighty Jupiter bolts the sky, nemesis for imagined crimes.
Terror blusters at the lightless panes; what solace
Can there be for the unfledged girl, sharing the dark night
With original sin? I tuck my feet between his knees, lay my
Cheek against the clean shirt and breathe the smell of father.

(III)

This bleeding companion faints from a wound I did not
Impose. As puny as my arms may be, still I hold her.
Beyond the times I falter, there yet are days when
A bit of kindness I can spare.

(IV)

Not yet night, no longer day: I, careless, scuff my way
Down the red dust roads of Clopton. This is beauty
As beauty is—no tinny melodies whine for my notice—
Only crickets drawing steady bows across the hidden strings.
Bare fingertips of last light brush the pine needles, all
Distinctions subtle between shadow and sun-touch.
This is pagan worship; and, pagan, I lie barefoot in
Tweedy green grasses, my nose buried in the moist, spaded
Earth, the Alabama clay: a part, a blending, a prayer.

(V)

Happiness seems remote, a straw man endlessly laughing. The
Anger weakens as I swing my foolish sword, but sadness
Stays. Hear me lash my stinging words at all who watch me
Groan in the gaudy yellow sun. Fresh mourning tastes
So much like fear I cannot catch my breath.

(VI)

Wondering, I pause to poke at this collection, the loose-leaf
Feelings that take their burns in the theatre where I live.
Here is the small bit of power you gave me in that dogwood time—
Not enough for wearing crowns, but enought for favor-asking.
And this is the easing a little girl needs when the world
Is dark and the self is soiled. Here, too, are the
Colorbright roads of October: evergreens and red, red,
Clay: and here are you to reap what gentleness
I may hold when the anger has been smoothed and tamed.
Uncertain, all else may pass away, but these will remain:
The loose-leaf impressions that create and complete me
Are played in the theatre where you live.

—Margaret Renkl

Honorable Mention,
Sigma Tau Delta Poetry Contest

A WAR POET

I wept at his blood-bartered poems.
He died too young; even 'fore truth
Cried of what his fresh eyes had known,
the war-disposed bones of youth.

But perhaps his flowers grew
Only from the purple-pulsing sand.
A magic conjured through
The rotted corpse and mutilated hand.

At their loss too I wept
Those skulls without the brain they'd kept
And screaming girls with empty bower
Whose husbands' lives had blessed a flower.

—B. G. Martin

Honorable Mention,
Sigma Tau Delta Poetry Contest

YOU CALL IT SCHIZOPHRENIA

When will you learn
that I'm no carbon copy
from the textbook
you memorized in psych 101?

So there are no motives
prompting the scenes I make,
and I fail the performances
you ask me to improvise . . .

I believe in tragedy—
heroes acting—miscalculating,
and sympathizers purging emotions
in bacchanal-like frenzies.

My passion is a specimen
in your laboratory of logic—
labeled schizophrenia,
jarred in formaldehyde.

Pity you are not
of heroic proportion.
Freud will not explain
my good-bye . . .

—Ruth Schowalter

Honorable Mention,
Sigma Tau Delta Poetry Contest

DIAMONDBACK RITE OF SPRING, AND NO STRAVINSKY IN SIGHT

This too is music, the rattler's deadly chatter
and bluegrass where the phallic magnolias bloom,
but first you have to get there.

So drive down 29's cracked asphalt,
perhaps behind a pulpwood truck, its logs—
bark already suggesting scales—
seeping spring resin.

Pass Smuteye and go through Troy.
Do not digress to Goshen, Elba or Friendship,
and hit 331 and head into the state's corn gut,
find South Alabama already forsythia-sparked
here in near-spring, where new-turned furrows
flank the serpentine road.
Deep in tornado season the red-tail's hover
anticipates stern wind, and
redwing blackbirds perch still on fenceposts
as daffodil blooms burst in the eye of the wind.

Find the high school stadium
where legends come alive
and the brave come from miles around
to collect their prey, the winter-lulled
diamondbacks found sleeping in gopher holes,
and seek the local Lions' bounty.
Spectators cluster, anxious to be
frightened and finally saved.

Here you will find a beauty once, by winter,
repressed, now wild in dance contests,
the craft stalls where artisans hawk
their wares—the snakeskin wallet and belt,
fried rattler on a stick, clocks
carved from native wood, Watkins Products,
the bare truth of handmade sheath knives.

Overhear the auctioneer's babble
as contestants spit Red Man
for accuracy and distance. Cameras snap
the queen and her court. Copters
from the Air Force circle at 5000 feet.

Lost chaps weep behind the bandstand,
and two bicycle-less Mormons laugh
at the karate demonstration,
cinder blocks shattered with a human hand.

Farmers in bib overalls get green
cotton candy in their beards. The litter
of Blue Ribbon cans begins to mount.
A man handles the serpents, milks the venom
into a Mason jar. A magician makes rabbits vanish
and breathes ignited kerosene.
A policeman steps between as two near neighbors
square off behind the portable johns.

Then a sow greased with vegetable fat
runs across the stadium's east end zone
as tacklers dive through faded lime lines
with dreams of ham eluding their arms,
until a gap-toothed child
with azalea-pink eyes catches it
with snake-quick hands, raises his trophy
against a clouding sky.

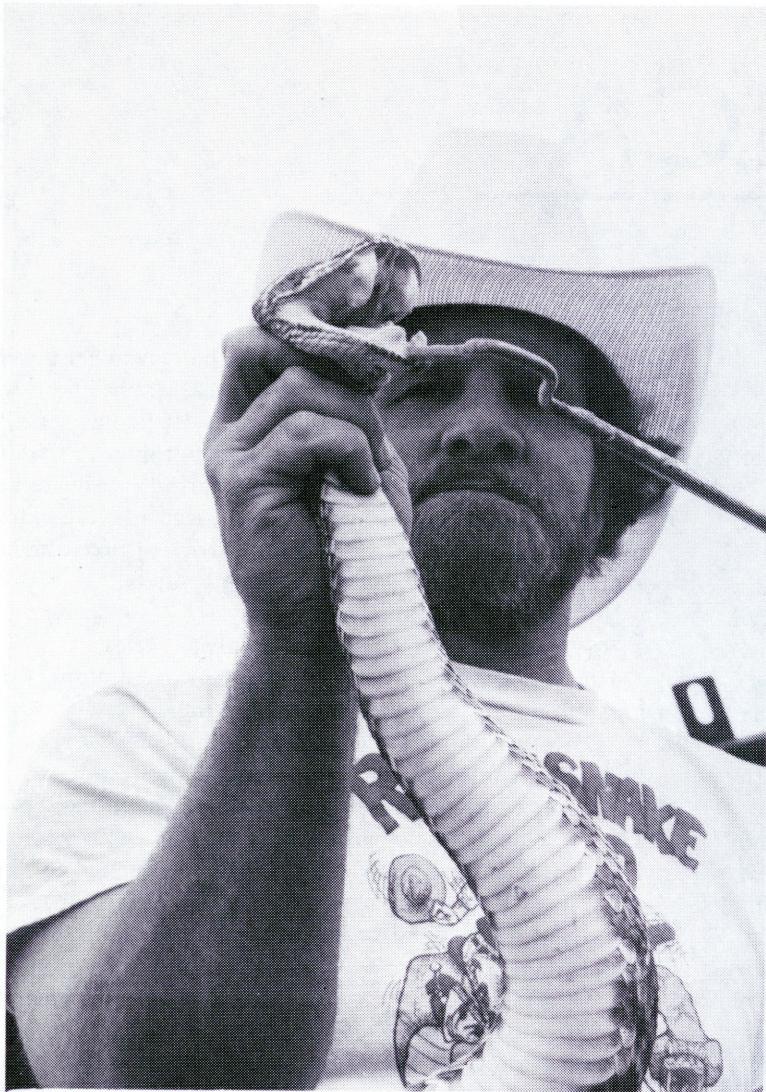
All images collapse and tear
in the squeal of the snared beast,
and you will leave with a buckshot pattern
of impressions—competition and celebration.
You may carry memories of the girl
in a plaid shirt and button declaring
I'M PROUD TO BE A REDNECK,
arm in arm with two men in Stetsons,
unshaven, unashamed as satyrs.

A fiddler with fingers missing from his right hand
plays as you return to your car
to find a Latter Day Saints' tract
trapped beneath the windshield vanes,
inclement religious weather,
and weeks later, as dogwoods presage
the High Passion season, in Lent
you may wake in your safe bed
and night sweat and begin to question:

Did the buckdancers' heels flash primal sparks?
Did skydivers fall from distant stars?
Did the Rattlesnake Queen in a jeweled tiara smile
while the trophy in her hands broke sunlight with its fangs?
Did the wild tornado-coil of the old pagan rite
tense and begin to strike for the heart's blood?

Did the greased pig become a soiled god?

—R. T. Smith



cotton field in winter

under a gray sky and cold air
i've got a head full of trivia

that won't go away:
arthur franz in *the sniper* (1952)

the autopsy of assassination,
my father and i walk the rows

seeking artifacts—projectile points
pottery sherds, whatever the dirt

can yield of a man's presence.
cotton left by the picker

hangs on the dry plants
like tiny hands of the white race.

the dark earth clings to our boots
like the weight of another world.

—A. J. Wright

Photo by R. T. Smith

ELEGY—A.W.G

Clear morning light pierces these boughs
Sharpens and dims; fades and recovers
A thousand greens encircle me

Mockingbirds distract and blend
Now offering, now a welcome interlude
Alabama summer fully bloomed

Honeysuckle thickens still air with sweetness
Crickets sing and then are silent
July surrounds in sleepy blackberry solitude

One chill air creeps in, unknown, unseen
Neither birds nor crickets cease their summer
In the green boughs I shiver

Faint harbinger of ill invades these boughs
Tickling, taunting, icy wind pierces this cradle
How strange to tremble in July

Summer bids this wind away, away
Denials scream from bough to bough
Crickets chanting summer, summer, summer

Death's herald comes whispering emptiness
Slowly I slip below green boughs

—Margaret Renkl
First Place, Sigma Tau Delta Poetry Contest

THE MARRIAGE OF THE POET AND THE ARTIST

You kissed me
within the first hour

a continent arose
and floated into my left side
and filled a space

the people who live
in these countries
are musicians and oralists
poems are ships that sail
constantly out from ports

sometimes a ship moves right out over the edge

this is when my hands catch it
and you make pictures
from the sailor's stories

—dean wiseman golden

PICA

by Sonny Long

—ONE—

Raymond began to panic.

Sweat poured from his face. The nerve-wracking months of trying to keep his secret finally culminated into pangs of reality.

His hands trembled as he fumbled with the telephone. Airline reservations had to be made.

"I have to leave before I hurt someone. I'm losing control." He spoke out loud to himself, a soliloquy of urgency.

He hurried to finish packing before his wife came home. His thoughts rushed to her reaction.

"She will probably be mad at first. Then she'll cry. Sylvia always cries."

His thoughts turned to concern, and again he spoke to himself. "You should leave a note. Try to explain."

He went to the dresser to get paper. His eyes stopped and stared at his reflection in the mirror. Were those his eyes? His face? It was a blank, expressionless slab atop his shoulders. The earlier panic was replaced with a nauseating numbness.

He couldn't remember when it had all started. Was it when Sylvia was pregnant, or before? It didn't matter now.

The frown in the mirror jolted him back to the present. He found the paper and began to write: Sylvia,—

"I don't know what to write, what to say."

The knots in his stomach again began their vice-grip hold on his insides, on his soul.

The panic returned. He scribbled: **Powerless; It Controls All.**

Raymond grabbed his luggage and sprinted out the door.

The drive to the airport relaxed him. He knew that he was doing the right thing. Maybe if he got away things would be different. Things do change. Raymond checked in and plumped down to wait for his flight.

Raymond liked airports. He always found the variety of people fascinating. He began to feel hungry but fought the urge.

—TWO—

Sylvia wanted to scream but fought the urge.

Raymond's note made no sense. Was this some sort of silly game? He was always joking around. He had been acting depressed lately. Now this note, and his luggage and clothes were gone.

She called his office, but the word there was that he had never returned from lunch. It was nearly 4:30. Sylvia began to worry.

She and Raymond had been married four years. Nothing was perfect, but she was happy and thought Raymond was,

too. Now, apparently, he had left. He had given her no sign that he was upset. Why did he leave? Maybe there was another woman. No, that couldn't be it. He had been acting a little different lately, but there was nothing that would indicate an affair. He had these long periods of silence and seemed to be losing his sense of humor. He had these sudden urges to take long walks, I guess to work off what he had eaten. His appetite was great, especially lately.

Sylvia sat dazed. She began to cry.

Raymond had been right. Sylvia always cries.

Her daze lasted until seven o'clock, the usual supper time, and still no Raymond. She called the police.

"Detective Phillips, please," she told the desk sergeant.

A crisp, confident voice answered Sylvia's request.

"Mike? Mike! This is Sylvia Jenkins. Raymond's gone. He left a note, his luggage is missing, his car is gone, he hasn't been at work since noon," machine-gunned Sylvia.

"Whoa! Slow down, slow down," soothed Phillips. "Tell you what. You make some coffee, and I'll be right over, O.K.?"

"Great, Mike," Sylvia managed. "I'm sorry. I knew we could count on you."

Sylvia hung up and numbly navigated her way to the kitchen.

"Here's your coffee, Mike," said Sylvia after the detective arrived. "Raymond quit drinking coffee for some reason. He used to be so fond of it. It was kind of funny, he started drinking a lot of iced drinks. He seemed to relish . . ."

"Sylvia!" Mike interrupted. "I know Raymond wasn't heavy into alcohol, but did he take any drugs, you know, prescriptions? Valium? Anything?"

"No, not a thing. You think that's what that note means. He's addicted or 'on' something?"

"Maybe. It's really hard to say. Something had him uptight enough to leave. I checked the airport, but nothing in his name. He could have just driven somewhere. We're looking for his car."

"Thanks. I know you'll do all you can. It's just that I don't understand it at all. Everything seemed just fine."

"Was he working late, keeping irregular hours, or doing anything out of the ordinary?"

"Nothing, nothing at all," Sylvia began to sob.

Mike stared at the words scribbled on the paper in his hand: **Powerless; It Controls All.**

"Pica," Mike blurted.

"What?" Sylvia asked.

"Pica, pica. Does pica mean anything to you?"

"Pica? What's pica? What are you talking about?"

"Look at the note," Mike pointed out. "The first letters of

all the words are capitalized, are darker and are underlined. It's almost like the message is in the initials."

Mike grabbed the phonebook. No Pica listed. "Hoped maybe it was a name," he told Sylvia.

Sylvia slumped farther into the depths of the corner of the couch. Her eyes closed, and her head lolled to one side.

"I don't feel very good," Sylvia said weakly.

"You do look a bit pale. Why don't you relax here on the couch, and I'll give your doctor a call. I'm sure he would like to give you something to help you relax."

Sylvia spread out on the couch as Mike moved to the phone. She closed her eyes tighter and saw Raymond—funny, laughing Raymond, strong Raymond, tender, loving Raymond, gone Raymond.

The activity of the day finally caught up with her. Sylvia tried to relax.

-THREE-

The flight was well underway. Raymond tried to relax.

He searched his pocket for a stick of gum. As he unwrapped his found prize, he thought it was somewhat like peeling fruit; having to remove the outside to get to the inside.

"Hey, mister, got another piece of gum?" The teenager next to Raymond asked.

"Last one. Take it." Raymond offered the reward of his efforts to the youngster.

"Thanks," he smiled as he crammed the sweet delicacy into his mouth.

The saliva of anticipation still swamped Raymond's palate. He tried to figure out what to do with the wrapper.

Looking over at his neighbor, Raymond popped the wrapper into his mouth.

The teenager raised a quizzical eyebrow.

"I hate to put paper in the ashtray," Raymond explained. The teen nodded in semi-agreement but still watched Raymond from the corner of his eye for a moment.

"Funny guy," he said to himself.

Raymond gnashed the foil and paper between his teeth. He savored the tasteless paper, relished the metallic scraping of the foil.

The stewardess came by with coffee and soft drinks. Raymond and his neighbor both took a soft drink.

Raymond glanced at his neighbor. He was sipping his soda and reading a sports magazine.

Swallowing the gum wrapper, Raymond gulped down all of his soda. Quickly, he slid a couple of pieces of ice into his mouth. He chomped them with zeal.

Quickly, he added more ice. And more. His cheeks bulged with ice.

The teenager looked at Raymond. "Funny guy," he thought.

Raymond make short work of the ice in his cup. "Gonna eat your ice?" he asked the teenager.

The teenager didn't answer but handed Raymond his cup. Raymond's mouth gaped as he emptied the ice into it. He chewed and chomped.

He pushed the button on the armrest and eased his seat

back. For the first time today he smiled.

-FOUR-

Sylvia managed a smile, probably her first since Raymond left. Mike had just received a phone call. Raymond's car had been found at the airport. At least, she thought, he was probably all right, on a plane going somewhere.

The doctor had arrived and was taking Sylvia's blood pressure.

"I'm really sorry, Mrs. Jenkins," he said. "But you must try to relax."

"I know doctor, I know. But it is all so strange, so unlike Raymond."

"You say he left a note, huh?"

"Right," Mike interjected as he flashed the puzzling parchment. "But I'll be damned if I can make any sense of it."

"Well, if anyone can, you can, Detective Phillips," the doctor said encouragingly. "Anything else I can do?"

"No, I guess not," said Mike. "You say you never prescribed any drugs for Raymond that could cause or explain his irrational behavior?"

"Nope. I don't think I've even talked to him since Sylvia was pregnant. Remember, Sylvia? He called and was all concerned about your strange cravings for pizzas and pickles at two in the morning."

"Sure, I remember. He used to get up with me and match me bite for bite. Poor guy, it's a wonder it didn't drive him crazy. And then when we lost the baby . . ."

"Wait a minute! Let me see that note!" shouted the doctor.

Mike handed the doctor the note. "What is it, Doc?"

"The first letter of each word here. Do you know what they spell?"

"Sure, sure, I know. They spell 'pica.' But, besides a printers' measurement, who or what in the world is a 'pica'?"

"Pica, my dear detective friend, is the urge for unnatural foods, like pregnant women have. It's a condition usually caused by an iron deficiency. The cravings could be for food, like Sylvia's cravings, but are often for ice, clay, starch and assorted other things."

Sylvia bolted upright. "Wait a minute. What has all this pica business got to do with Raymond?"

Mike, too, looked puzzled. "O.K., Doc. What does this all mean?"

"Well, Mike, Sylvia, it's pretty far-fetched, but I have a guess."

Sylvia jumped up, wringing her hands. "What does my pregnancy have to do with anything? That was months ago."

"Sit down and relax, and I'll try to explain. It's pretty far-fetched, like I said, but I've learned not to be surprised by anything. My hypothesis is that Raymond got so caught up in your normal symptoms that he began to experience them himself. That sort of thing happens all the time."

"Now here the guesswork begins. Somehow, for some reason, he got really caught up in your strange eating urges. Something happened that made these urges uncontrollable."

"But that isn't any reason to run away. Just because he likes pizza and pickles," Sylvia's voice quavered.

"Easy, Sylvia," Mike said. "I think that what the doctor is driving at is that something abnormal, something psychological intensified these urges in Raymond. Maybe when you lost the baby he . . ."

"Snapped!" blurted the doctor.

"Snapped?" Sylvia tried to scream, but she was drained.

"We have no way of knowing, of course, unless we examine Raymond. If he got really 'mixed up,' there's no telling what he could do. His behavior today should make that obvious."

"Could he be dangerous, Doctor?" Mike asked.

Sylvia glared at him for asking such a question. Raymond wouldn't hurt a fly.

"Probably not to anyone but himself. But, when you're dealing with instability, it's hard to say what might happen." the doctor offered. "He's probably pretty scared about what's happening to him."

—FIVE—

"What's happening to me?"

Raymond jolted awake as his nightmare reached a climax. He had been trapped inside a glacier and began eating his way out. He had just seen some daylight when the ice began to melt, and he floundered, drowning in a pool of freezing water.

"Are you all right, mister?"

"Yeah, sure, kid. Why?"

"No reason, you're just sweating a lot. Bad dream?"

"I've had worse. Excuse me, I need to wash up."

Raymond squeezed his way past his young neighbor. He made his way to the restroom, staring at the faces occupying the seats that lined his path—young, old, white, black. They didn't know that he had a problem. They didn't know that he existed. He wasn't sure that he did.

Raymond had to wait for a restroom. Finally, a fat, black woman, with too much hairspray, too much cheap cologne and too much body, forced Raymond against the wall as she tanked her way back to her too-small seat.

Raymond stepped into the restroom. He clicked the lock shut. A deep sigh escaped like a slow leak from cheap tire.

He couldn't quit sweating. He splashed water on his face and dried it with a paper towel. The sweat still wouldn't stop. Those now familiar twinges in the gut returned. This was the worst attack yet. Maybe he shouldn't have left. Maybe he should have told Sylvia about it. She would understand; after all, she should know how it feels. She'd probably think I was crazy. She'd probably—.

Raymond sat down. The pain in his stomach was winning the war over his will.

He reached for the tissue next to his present perch. He began to cram it into his mouth. With sheet after sheet he filled his jaws. Chewing as if he hadn't eaten in days, Raymond swallowed.

Too much. He began to choke. He dropped to his knees and tried to hack the glob of paper from his throat. It popped out. Raymond groveled on the floor begging for

breath.

A knock came on the door.

"Everything all right in there?" It was the Tinkerbell voice of a stewardess.

Raymond managed an "Uhuh," as he grabbed the sink and pulled himself up.

"What has happened to me?" he asked the frightened face that stared back at him in the mirror. His stomach churned. The saliva still flooded his mouth; some made its way out the corner.

"Drool, fool." He tried to look angry, but the face in the mirror refused to cooperate.

He began to wipe away the spittle. His fingers brushed his lips. His eyes searched their image for help. His mouth flew open. In went his fingers. He bit down hard. And harder, and harder. Again and again.

—SIX—

Again and again, Sylvia thought about what the doctor and Mike had said. It was just hard for her to believe. Raymond had some sort of psychological problem brought about by her losing their baby. It didn't seem possible.

The sun had just begun to peek over the horizon and spread its morning message across the sky. Sylvia had slept well, thanks to the doctor's medicine.

But, now the phone threatened to wake not only her, but the entire neighborhood. How long had it been ringing?

"Hello," Sylvia yawned into the receiver.

"Sylvia, this is Mike. We found Raymond."

"Thank God! Is he all right?"

"It's a long story, but he's in pretty good shape. He's in a hospital upstate, but they won't let you see him until later today. I told the doctors there about our theory. They are running some tests and" Mike paused.

"And what?"

"I'll fill you in later when I pick you up. We'll drive up together. There will be plenty of time to talk. You get some sleep. I'll be by about two."

"Thanks, Mike, for everything. Are you sure we can't go up now?"

"I'm sure. Strictly no visitors until later. It will be O.K. Get some more rest. Bye."

"See you at two then. Bye-bye."

Somehow Sylvia slept. At first she was too excited, but knowing that Raymond was well helped. The alarm woke her again at 11 o'clock.

She took a long shower and stretched lunch out to keep her busy waiting for Mike to arrive.

After an eternity of ticks on the kitchen clock, the doorbell rang. It was Mike.

The drive upstate was a pleasant one. The scenery helped ease the apprehension of the excursion.

"All I can honestly tell you, Sylvia, is that he took a flight upstate, but somehow he was injured on the plane, and they had to hospitalize him when the plane landed."

"Is it serious?"

"From what I was told he is fine. He is in good spirits and was asking for you all morning."

"And the tests? Were they psychological tests, or for the injury?"

"That's all I know, dear. Sorry. We'll be there soon, so save your questions for the doctors and Raymond."

"And Raymond," Sylvia repeated.

It was Sylvia's first visit to a hospital in several months. She still didn't like hospitals.

The nurse at the front desk had them wait in a reception area while Raymond's doctor was paged. Sylvia was nervous, and it showed.

"Can I get you some coffee or something?" Mike asked.

Sylvia shook her head and stared worriedly down one corridor, then another.

Raymond's doctor came. He led them to a room where they could talk in private.

The doctor explained to Sylvia what happened on the plane.

"He actually chewed off a finger." The horror of the thought spread over her face.

"Well, most of it and part of another one. He'll be able to use the hand after some therapy. His hand isn't what I'm worried about."

"What else is wrong? Yes, I know. Why he did it. Is that right?"

"I think we've pretty much pinpointed that, too."

"You have! Can you cure it, or help him, or whatever it is you do for whatever he has." Sylvia's horror changed to concern.

"Certainly," the doctor explained, "he is already well on his way to recovery."

Sylvia sighed and looked at Mike. He smiled and took her hand reassuringly.

"I understand, Mrs. Jenkins, that you lost a baby in childbirth several months ago."

"Yes."

"For some reason Raymond blamed himself."

"Why?" Sylvia questioned.

"I'm not real sure, but whatever the reason, the baby's death ingrained and warped the pica symptoms that he had originally begun feeling while you were pregnant. I guess it was his way of sharing the pain you were experiencing. Not only the physical pain, but the mental hurt when you lost the baby."

"And it got out of control?" Sylvia asked.

"Exactly. Instead of the normal symptoms, the shock of

the loss of the baby perverted everything. It took control."

"And now?"

"Now our tests show, and our psychiatry people agree that the shock of what he did to himself has brought him back to a grasp on reality. He's almost the normal Raymond you've always known."

"Almost?"

"He is going to need a lot of understanding about what he did. He'll probably be pretty ashamed. He knows that he was temporarily out of control, but he will still need an extra dose of care and love."

"That kind of therapy I can provide. Thank you, Doctor. Can I see him now?"

"Sure, come on."

The walk to Raymond's room seemed miles longer than the wheelchair ride she took out of the hospital after she lost the baby. At least then she knew what she faced. It was over. Now, she didn't know what to expect from Raymond. An unknown awaited her.

The doctor let her in alone.

Raymond looked good. He was sitting up reading. His right hand was bandaged.

"Sylvia!" His face brightened.

"Raymond, darling." Sylvia kissed her husband and grasped his good hand. "How do you feel?"

"Better than I've felt in months, despite this." Raymond raised his right hand. "I—I'm so sorry. I just didn't know what to do, so I ran."

"It's O.K., dear, I know the whole story. I know it wasn't the real you running away. If I had been a better wife, I would have known something was wrong. Still, you should have told me."

"I guess I didn't think you would understand."

"From now on I'll make an effort to understand. And you tell me when something is bugging you."

Raymond beamed. "It's a deal. Only there's just one thing dear," he said, a grin beginning to spread across his face.

"Yes?"

"If you notice something is bothering me, promise, please promise me that you'll never ask, 'What's eating you?'"

Sylvia's mouth dropped open. Raymond laughed. Sylvia laughed. Raymond cried. Sylvia cried.

Sylvia always cries.

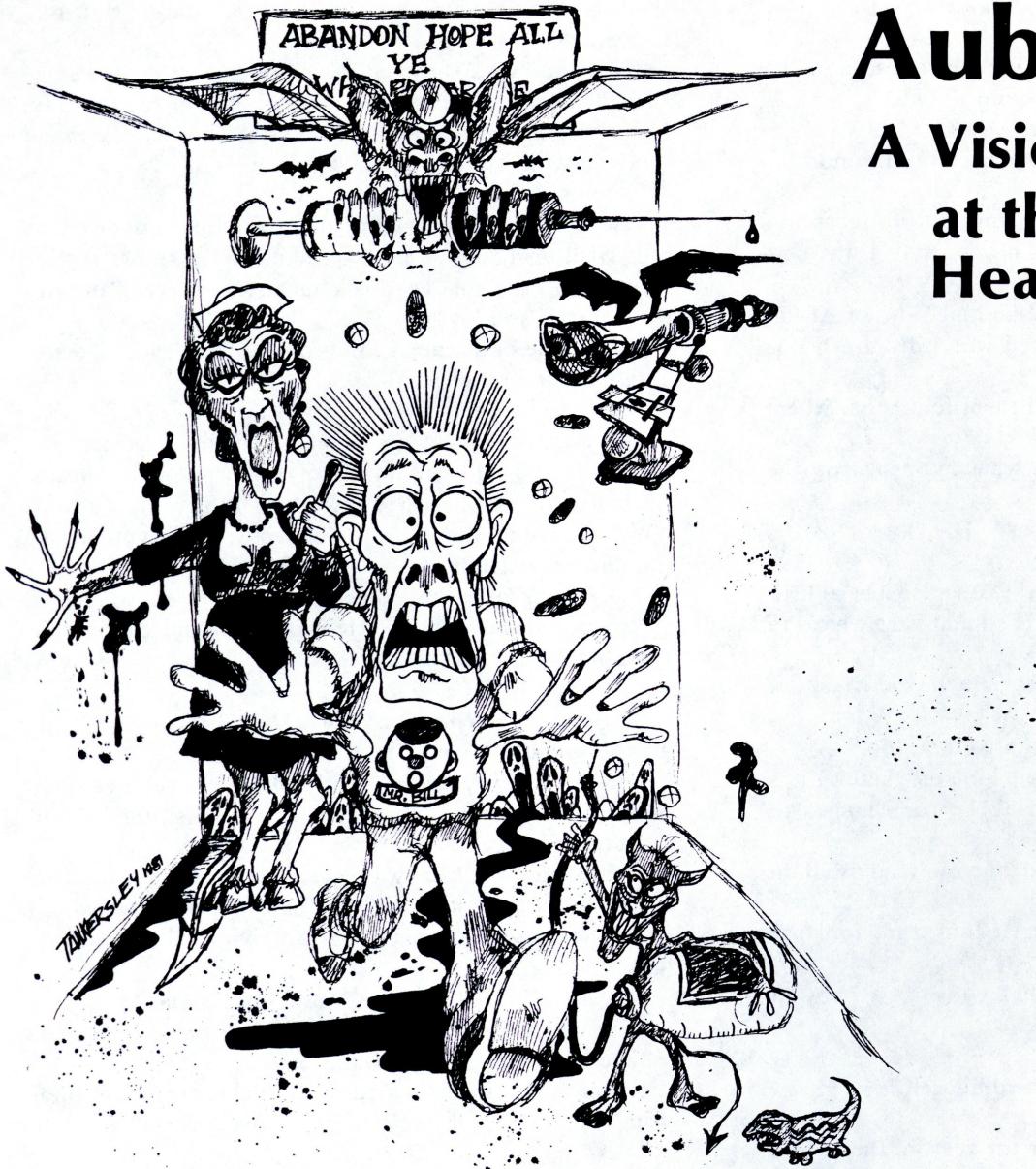
dark to dawn

steering
by the feel of touch
by the sound of breath
i could hear the skin singing
across her bones
on the first night out
of that ancient journey.

under the moon's silver scythe
no port departed
no destination reached—
just the bones sailing
under a song in the skin
as if the very act of moving
made the movers one.

—A. J. Wright

Auburn Flu: A Vision from Hell at the Student Health Center



by Tim Dorsey

It had already begun this winter quarter.

Each time they have a different name for it. The Hong Kong Flu, the Guam Flu, the Ugandan Flu, the New Jersey Flu; it really didn't matter. What did matter was that classrooms were emptying out . . . fast.

Just a little sniffle, I thought looking out from behind mirror sunglasses in front of Thach Hall. Five more steps — Crash — I was sprawled out on the sidewalk. Slowly I picked myself up and wiped the sweat from my brow. Yes, it was "The Fever," and that's nothing easy to bounce back from, at least not around here.

Drawing by Greg Tankersley

Vision became fuzzy, and everything went totally weird. I tried to stand, but the ground was sloshing around.

"Are you all right?" asked a friend.

"Mfyugbxwqnp gtjy dwzfdl?" I responded.

He soon got me over to my ten o'clock class at Haley Center and helped me seat myself.

100.0 degrees.

Fifteen minutes into class I was drifting hopelessly. The ceiling was melting, and the walls were breathing. Staring blankly at my desktop, I noticed everything got quiet. Looking up, I saw everyone staring at me.

"Would you like the question repeat-

ed?" asked the teacher.

"Kfgdnwuh . . ." I answered. My desk was tipping over.

"Did you read the material last night?" Everyone was getting suspicious as I shot quick glances around the room. I panicked and bolted out the door.

Running by the elevators on the third floor, I saw another student dash out of a door on my right. Then two more bolted from a door on my left. There were twelve of us by the time we hit the concourse, all flailing madly through the crowd.

(Author's note: 'My memory failed me at this point, as I will explain soon. We resume the action that evening while

I'm trying to get a friend to bring me some soup.)

It's late Thursday, and I'm slouched against a wall in my apartment with the phone in my hand. The heater has been on all day to help me fight this thing, but it's out of control. I think the bedroom floor is covered with glass, but I can't be sure. I don't remember anything except a poignant jag in the back of my brain dealing with some extreme behavior that I'd rather not have published.

101.3 degrees.

All I have on is a sweatshirt, but that's O.K. since I'm the only one here. Sweat is pouring off my red face as I pop a couple more of these fat pink pills into my mouth. The phone continues to ring.

The Beatles are playing on my stereo at the threshhold of hearing, but the noise sounds as if it's being blared from a megaphone on a helicopter hovering just off my balcony. I hang up the phone to check on the helicopter but find nothing. A girl on a nearby balcony spots me and screams. Forgetting that I'm only in my sweatshirt, I say, "What? Did you see the helicopter?" She puts her hand over her mouth and runs inside.

I go back inside and pick up the phone again. No point in studying or working at all. The delirum is so strong that there's only one thing left to do. However, I have no idea what it is.

Phone: "Hello?"

TD: "Yes uh . . . what do you want?"

Phone: "Excuse me?"

TD: "Did I say something? What is this number? Am I involved in something?"

Phone: "This is Joe, are you . . ."

TD: "How many of these pills have I taken?"

Phone: "Are you in trouble? Do you need the Crisis Hotline?"

TD: "The helicopter's back!"

Phone: "What's going on?"

TD: (click)

I run out the door again. Ten girls are waiting on the balcony and start laughing. "Tell me when it comes back," I say and walk back to the phone.

Phone: "Hello?"

TD: "Will you get serious!" (A refrigerator falling over is heard in the background.)

Phone: "Tim? Is that you? You sound

like you're gargling."

TD: "The Fever."

Phone: "Oh yea, how's the fever coming?"

TD: "Helicopters and girls acting silly . . ."

Phone: "Girls acting silly? Do you only have a sweatshirt on?"

TD: "I did it again . . ."

Phone: "You sound like your fading."

TD: "... soup . . ." (Sound of phone bouncing on floor)

I notice some beans boiling over, so I crawl to the stove. Grabbing the handle of the pot, I take two steps and throw the whole business into the bathroom, shattering the translucent shower door.

101.8 degrees.

Threading a sheet of typing paper cockeyed into my typewriter, I start on an English paper. I soon lose consciousness.

I come to, only to find myself entwined in typewriter ribbon. It is now time to try for in-patient status at Drake Student Health Center.

Walking into the reception room with an armload of Kurt Vonnegut novels, I approach the front desk: "I'd like a room by the pool, please."

"You'll have to fill out this form, take a seat with the others and wait your turn," replies the desk clerk. I turn around to see fifty other students in various stages of disrepair. I choose a seat. The last thing I need now is a hassle of any kind, but my luck seems to be a little short today. The person to my left started talking to me.

"I wonder how long you have to be here to get service," he says. "I have this nail sticking through my foot, and it's bleeding all over the place. I can't believe this garbage! What kind of . . ."

This zipper-head is really getting on my nerves. I will have to dispose of him quickly and cleanly. "Wow! That sounds terrible," I say. "I'm here for licking paint brushes in a radium dial factory. I think there was an incident with some knives, but I'm not sure. Wait, I think I have one more knife in my sock." I grope at my ankle with both hands as my tormentor hops away on one foot.

But the battle's only begun. With all those other people in front of me, it's unlikely that I'll get a room . . . unless . . .

I run up to the front desk. "Ha ha ha

ha ha, they said my plans were demented, they laughed at me. But now look who's laughing, ha ha ha ha . . . but you won't tell them, will you? . . . Wait, you were with them! What have you done with Junior? . . . No! Not the cigarette burns! Auuughhhh!" Then I collapse on the floor.

"Nurse, come quick. Get this man to screening."

A young nurse revives me from my feigned seizure . . . What? Feigned seizure? Was it feigned? Was I only thinking that I was in control?

102.4 degrees.

I am filling out a form in a small room as the doctor enters. "How are you doing today?" he asks.

"Doc, where are you, Doc? I can hear your voice, but things are turning black."

"Knock off the act. You're the fifth one today to pull it," he says. "I suggest that you go home and wait for the fever to break on its own in a couple days."

My hopes for a room look dim, but I still want one badly. During a less crowded season last year, I got a room and was waited on hand and foot. Until they kicked me out. I made the mistake of not following the dosage directions on my prescription. They found me the next morning outside the front door. I was standing there in my white smock, holding an intravenous bottle in front of me and posing as a lawn jockey.

I was now desperate for a room. No sacrifice in self-respect would be too great. I stand, stare at the ceiling for a few seconds and do a 360-degree pirouette, falling over the doctor and into a lamp. I then carom off a cabinet and into a small metal table, sending a tray of urine samples crashing to the floor. I am contemplating spinning across the hall into X-ray to cause some more mayhem, but there's no need; they have just sent someone to prepare a room. I slide off the table to the ground.

I am led over to a lab where a blood sample is to be taken. Vision is deteriorating; depth and spatial perception are shot. I am seeing lab technicians running around swinging microscopes and forceps over their heads.

"Come this way," says one of them. I follow, expecting to have to deal with some very nasty business. Is she laughing? Snickering? I'm pretty sure I see her

open hand trembling over an array of extremely sharp objects of every design. She grabs a needle and spins around to face me, casting a steely cold glare from her eyes. I don't care if this is my imagination or what; I'm not going to be able to make this scene.

She walks toward me from the other side of the room as my mind reels. This could be any number of things — maybe some wigged-out revenge scheme or some bizarre ritual passed down through med school. What do we really know about what they teach in med school anyway?

Or maybe it's a frame-up. I'll bet

that's it! They'll just mix in a few goodies that'll nail me to the floor-boards at the grand jury, and it's curtains for me. "The defendant's blood sample contained more chemicals than Dupont laboratories." I must make my move now.

103.2 degrees.

"Just kidding," I say, standing up. "I'm fine, never felt better. I think I'll do some jogging. Yes, I'm leaving now..."

"Afraid of a little needle? Now just hold still," she says.

I charge for the door, screaming. "You won't fool me. I'm not going to get indicted!"

The only thing between freedom and me as I come sprinting around the corner is a lobby full of staring people. I am being chased by two nurses and an orderly. A man bleeding from the foot runs out the opposite end of the lobby yelling about a knife in someone's sock.

My pursuers cease their efforts as I make it to the front lawn. Getting back to my apartment, I make a mental note not to be sick again in Auburn. There is very little margin here for that kind of error.

leaves of gray

brown clad leaves
racing windward
in fields wintered in shades of beige
tell-tale
of leaves of gray
Shadows yawn and stretch
gray ghosts of ebony nite
lingering,
retiring timidly with day's light
Cold wind-touched cheeks
-flushed,
sing of not pain
nor freedom from
yet bespeaks
a premonition
of some unborn truth
conceived, yet a reverie.
And brown clad leaves
Are but leaves of gray
issuing forth
from stark pallid stands of trees
charging windward
tumble-weeding across

fields of gray
in lonely pursuance
of a whisper,
a secret obscure
-the withholding of a promise.
fugitives from fall
fated,
to fade away
with the coming of rains
and spring.
reticent mentors
destined to wane
like tears
to the warmth and radiance
of a smile,
a summer's kiss,
and a prismatic promise
-rendered
at the final passing
of the futile yearning
of leaves of gray.

—by Paul K. Himebaugh

drunk with daffodilly breezes,
i doze beneath a budding elm
drenched with sunshine, butter warm.

lovely thoughts float in and out my mind,
i lift too late my lazy hand to write them down.

my pen squeaks dry on paper,
empty as a well-sprung trap that tasted once
the glistening fur of a laughing fox.

—Beth J. Dees

CAPTURED LIGHT

in the spring
under moonlight
she turns the garden earth
in her hands.
as she plants
an image of herself
she dreams
of a wheel in a wheel;
by morning
she'll think of a nail
that driven too close
to an edge
splinters the wood.

the cool dirt pours
between her fingers
like a dark water.
next door
transformers hum
like a phrase
in the brain.
for an instant
she makes connection
between her body
and the pole of darkness;
her skin shimmers
in the brief light.

—A. J. Wright

semi-satori

i dream of stepping off the bus
into the brick maze
of coincidence

the hedge maze of possibilities

where a face
is a greeting
and not a mask

where a hand
is a caress
and not a fist

where each word
is a combination
and not a lock.

i have the feeling
i've either been here before
or will arrive shortly.

but almost every minute
i'm just standing straight up
with a finger in the wind

waiting for the bus.

—A. J. Wright

SHADES OF GRAY

How often I have walked upon these borders,
Passing the smooth and silent stones,
Reading a name, searching for an identity
And feeling something less than alone.

Too many markers of one bland color
cover rotten wood and forgotten flesh;
Such faded, common memorials
For those who have found their rest.

That same empty color blankets my mind;
It makes a twilight of my day.
It covers shadow and smothers light
So that I wander through shades of gray.

I move aimlessly in cloud; I run,
Ever hoping, never reaching.

Frustrated to know, as I travel alone,
That I cannot see what I am seeking.

"This graveyard is a pretty, peaceful place."
I have heard the outsiders say.
But a grave is a name without a face,
and death, a darker shade of gray.

From womb to earth, from flesh to granite,
The bookends of life remain;
And I, yet between, who roam this gray planet,
Am nothing more than a name.

"I am become a name . . ."
So Tennyson's Ulysses said.
My dull shades of gray will darken one day,
And only a name will be dead.

—Timothy O. Chitwood



Illustration by Sissy Reich

I Used To Play Cops and Robbers

by Keith Biesiada

The rising sun warmed the winter day. The air, rich with the clean taste of dew, breezed casually between the buildings but rose, at times, into a passionate gust which brought refreshment to the hot-blooded. It was a good, cold morning for a rising metropolis that had seen its fair share of nocturnal malefactions.

A policeman was lying, unconscious, at the rear of an alley which opened into a mediocre parking lot that served a number of prominent establishments, including two bastions of that society: a liquor store and a bank. The cop's nice blue coat was stained crimson at the left shoulder, where his thick, red liquid had been diverted onto the fabric through the agency of a small calibre bullet. His poor brain sweated profusely as it replayed again and again the evening's horror show to its captive audience.

The cop could not escape the badness. He had charged bravely after the mugger into the blind alley, which it was not; but the scoundrel surprised him by opening fire with a single, errant shot, which passed harmlessly into the street.

Things were suddenly different. The cop became aware of a lump in his throat, which thickened with each step. His legs leadened, like he was running across the surface of Jupiter toward whatever snarling tiger awaited him at the rear of the passageway. His heart began to go 'bloop, bloop' and louder still 'Bloop, Bloop' but stopped altogether, as well as he knew, when the villain rounded the corner. It was then only the four-letter word 'duty,' sometimes spelled 'dutie,' which spurred him on. He could no longer hate the evil that had been, for fear of that which could be, and it would be much later and only with great difficulty that he would remember what happened next. But when he did, he would never forget the ambush and the feeling, like Krakatoa exploding in his shoulder.

His mind, however, had it all on tape, and he was encored often, with his brain editing and rewriting each new version of the event. The type of weapons were constantly being changed. He and his criminal were armed, at times, with guns, cannons, laser rifles, thermonuclear missiles, and even more primitive implements of destruction, like spears and crossbows. Often they were equipped differently and disparately, like when the cop carried only a sling with a rock, while his adversary had a flamethrower. Once, they engaged in a World War I style dogfight. He did not always chase the mugger into an alley. The path of pursuit might be a sidewalk, a street, a jungle, a desert or even a red carpet which led into a nice, efficient trash compactor. He saw himself ice-skating on a boggy, dark river, but the malefactor was nowhere in sight. Perhaps he had already gone in. When he had viddied it for the Avogadroth time, he encountered another person just inside the alley, who grabbed him by the shoulder and prevented him from going further.

First there was purple haze, then red haze, then just haze. Finally, a face, but what's the place and the time? Was anything real? The pain was real.

"Hey man! Hey man! Are you okay? Wake up!"

He heard a voice, but it did not make any sense. The face was clearer now, but there was a lot of hair on it, and it seemed familiar. Because of the pain the recognition brought the cop no joy, only a great, cold fear and a feeling of helplessness. He felt the pain, heard the voice, saw the face, felt the pain and the fear and tried to crawl out of a huge cone easily the size of the universe, with slippery sides made from the face, the voice, the fear and the pain, the pain, the pain. The poor man lay on the ground and writhed in agony.

"Don't take me. I don't want to die. You don't have anything for me!"

A young man with long hair, light brown in color, and a full but short-trimmed beard was kneeling beside the wounded policeman. (Some people would have called him a hippy, but he was not, for the simple reason that hippies no longer existed. They became officially extinct on the day that Abbie Hoffman turned himself in.) The young man had been packing snow onto the shoulder to help stop the bleeding. When the cop became delirious, he applied the good, cold stuff to his forehead, as well. Soon, the cop was awake.

"Hey . . . Who are . . . "

A hard stab of pain stopped the breathless question, just short of completion. The cop emitted a series of tortured moans, and the young man hurriedly began to pack even more snow onto the injured shoulder.

"Does that feel any better?"

"I'm cold."

"Can you sit up?"

"No. Leave me alone."

The young man managed to raise the cop into a sitting position. Soon the cop was relatively comfortable, as the snow had numbed his shoulder, but there was still pain. He was also very cold.

"I'm cold, real cold. Can you get me some coffee or something?" The young man thought for a few seconds.

"I don't think it would be a good idea for me to leave you right now, but I have got something warm for you to drink."

The young man ambled over to a shopping basket that the cop had not seen until then. He reached into one of the large brown paper bags and pulled out a thermos bottle.

"You might not like this," said the young man as he opened the thermos and poured a cupful of steaming, hot yellow liquid and handed it to the cop, "but it'll warm you up."

The young man was twice right, and the cop resisted the urge to spit the stuff out. Feeling himself coming back to life more and more with each swallow, he ignored the bitterness of the herb, or whatever it was, and consumed the drink with the same wholeness of purpose that a baby attaches to mother's milk.

"What is this stuff?"

"It's lemon grass tea."

"It tastes lousy. Why do you drink it?"

Second Place, Sigma Tau Delta Fiction Contest

"It's not bad for you, the way coffee is. How do you feel?"

"A little better. My shoulder still hurts."

"I don't know how bad it is, but don't worry. My lady went for help."

"Oh. Can I have another cup?"

Soon the cop was working his way through another hot cup of yucky lemon grass tea. He stared out into the parking lot between sips, performing both actions with the rhythm and timing of a good Swiss watch, a remnant, no doubt, of the two weeks of accordion lessons he had taken when only ten years old. One, two, three, sip, two, three, stare, and so on, until he had drained the cup. He was a bit tired from loss of blood and soon found himself standing at the edge of a tall cliff, overlooking the sea. Unseen hands pushed him forward, and he awoke with a start that was not pleasant for his shoulder. He looked over to the young man to ask for more tea but found him smoking a marijuana cigarette.

"What the hell is that?"

"It's a . . . Oh, I forgot you were a cop. I'll put it out."

"That's against the law."

"That must be why I can't get any at the Seven-Eleven."

"Do your parents know you smoke pot?"

"I'm twenty-eight. I couldn't care less."

"I have to arrest you."

The young man stared out of fear-glazed eyes at the helpless policeman for a moment, then composed himself and scowled in disgust.

"Do you have to be a pig? We just saved your life, for crying out loud. If my lady and I hadn't found you when we did, you could have bled to death by now. Does a bust mean more to you than your life?"

The snow around the cop's shoulder had by then melted to a large degree, and the pain was getting worse.

"I said it's against the law!"

"So's murder, but there are murderers who have served less time in jail than some people have for possession of one lousy jay. Do you think that's fair?"

The young man relaxed his glower and actually smiled a little. He produced a large, closed jackknife, which he used as a microphone for an improvisational routine, from his back pocket.

"Calling all cars. Calling all cars. Proceed to the Regency Hotel. There's a cache of ex-Nazi war criminals and mass murderers holed up in Room 666. Bee-oop. Crackle. Crackle."

"That's how static sounds on a radio."

"Cancel that last directive. Officer Bezoomny,' That is your name, isn't it? 'has just reported a house full of hippies smoking grass and placing bets on the Super Bowl game. These freaks have no consciences at all, so shoot if they so much as breathe.'

"Listen to the sound of sirens, by Simon and Garfunkel."

"Dut-da-da. Dut-da-dut-da-da. My name is Friday. This is the city.' " He was funny, and the cop chuckled at his antics.

"Drive faster, O my brothers. My God! Those drug-addled creeps are grabbing teenaged girls off the street and forcing them to perform bizarre sex acts' Ignore their sque-

als of pleasure. 'and to consume all natures of heinous chemicals. They're giving beer to underaged girls! Flush them out, O my brothers, and crucify, crucify. Give us Barrabas! Oh, no! They've joined up with the mutants. Use tanks if you have to. These people must be destroyed. Don't be afraid to call us for air cover. Our precious society and the great status quo depend on your bravery. Now get in there and kill!' "

The young man suddenly flung the big knife open. Menacingly, he showed its fine cutting edge to the cop, who stared at it as if he were transfixed.

"I've been busted once before, and it was a very bad trip. I refuse to let it happen again."

With that, he raised his arm to hurl the lethal blade at the defenseless man.

At the last possible moment, the young man pivoted his hips and instead sent the knife arching gracefully toward the shopping basket. He retrieved it from one of the bags, where it had stuck in a piece of red fruit. He held it up proudly and looked innocently at the top through two-beer eyes.

"Would you care for an apple, sir?"

The cop gaped dumbly at him, and the young man grinned.

"Nah. Too biblical, right? How about a grapefruit, then? They're loaded with lots of sweetness and Vitamin C and are guaranteed not to turn you into a slavering pervert."

The young man cut the peel from the fruit, deftly.

"I'll have you know that many a valiant grapefruit hath felt this keen blade. Enjoy it."

The young man tore off a section of the grapefruit and handed it to the cop, then went about packing more snow onto his wounded shoulder. The cop bit off half of the piece of fruit and felt that he had never before tasted anything as wonderful.

He ate it slowly, allowing the juices to flow over the sweet and sour sensing parts of his tongue, where they lingered for as long as he could stand it, and then rushed down his throat, like a great river of pleasure. Sensual chills coursed up and down his spine, and his chest and legs tingled with life. He had eaten grapefruit before, but could not understand the effects that this one was having on him. He ate the rest of the piece passionately, and as it, too, went sliding down his esophagus, he vowed always to eat grapefruit and nothing but grapefruit.

"I never thought a grapefruit could taste so good. You didn't spike it with anything, did you?"

"Are you kidding? You think I'd waste good dope on a pig? Maybe the next time the sun goes supernova. Try a piece of apple."

The young man cut off a slice of the apple and gave it to the cop. He put it into his mouth, and the lush fruit inundated his senses, in just the same way that the grapefruit had. Grapefruit and apples, fresh, clean and lovely, courtesy of Mother Earth, the only place we know that has grapefruit and apples.

"Help should be here pretty soon. Do you still want to slap the cuffs on me?"

"Nah. Forget it. I must have been delirious or something."

"How come you're a cop?"

"Oh, there are a lot of reasons, I guess. Being trusted to protect society and people is one. Then there's knowing that you're doing a worthwhile job that you are appreciated for."

The cop stopped and thought for a moment. Then he looked sadly down at his shoes.

"I think I've wanted to be a cop ever since I was a kid."

"Was your dad a cop?"

"No. I don't know much about him. He left us, my mom and two older sisters, when I was three. All I remember is that he used to slap my mom around a lot."

The young man interrupted and indicated his half-smoked joint.

"Do you mind? This morning has been hectic. I just want to relax a little."

"Sure. Go ahead."

"I used to play cops and robbers with my friends. We stopped when I was about ten, but I often wished that we could have just played cops and robbers forever. I liked the idea of wearing a nice, blue uniform and having people look up to me. I thought that I could be a lieutenant or a captain or a detective. So, when I graduated from high school, I enrolled in the police academy."

"For twenty-two years I walked a beat across town. Everyone in my graduating class at the academy moved up in rank, except me. I turned out to be just another poor slob, trying to support a wife and two kids."

"Finally, I was transferred to this beat, and yesterday was my first day. So I get shot. No one had ever pointed a loaded gun at me before. I was never more scared than I was when I chased that guy into this alley. What a jerk I am!"

The young man offered the joint to the policeman.

"Do you want a hit?"

"Nah . . . Sure, why not."

The cop accepted the jay and inhaled deeply, while watching the red light at the end of the cigarette glow brighter. He passed it back.

"You ought to play backgammon. It'll teach you all about life. Hey man! You got it all wet!"

"Sorry."

The young man took another toke and then passed it back to the cop.

"Getting busted was the scariest thing that ever happened to me."

"It was unbelievable. I was walking home one night. This dog began to follow me, and I was really stoned, and I thought, 'Wow! What a neat pup.' I stopped to play with him for awhile. He was a lot of fun, but moody, and there was something erudite about him. So I named him Austin. Then the patrol car pulled up."

"Two cops got out, and they wanted to know what I was doing. I told them that I was playing with the dog, but they didn't believe me."

"Why not? Here, take this."

"The little bastard ran off. I told you he was moody."

"One of the cops told me to stand up. When I did, he pushed me down again. His partner was standing outside the car, talking into the radio. The cop that pushed me down

called over to him:

"It looks like this hippy, here, is too stoned even to stand on his own two feet. Let's go, boy. You'd better get up."

"Then he grabbed my shirt pocket to yank me up, but it just tore off, and I went down again. Two jays fell out."

"He picked them up, held them in his fist and shoved them in my face. Then he said, 'What the hell are these?' Then he freaked me out. He must have thought he was Clint Eastwood or something."

"He dragged me over to the car. Then, after he frisked me, he got his billy club out. I freaked and tried to make a run for it, but the other cop caught me and pinned my arms straight behind me. The first cop faced me, while the radio man handcuffed me. He had a real mean look in his eye, and he kept smacking that billy club into his other hand, like he was warming it up for action."

"Then he said, 'Okay, boy. We've got you for possession of marijuana and resisting arrest. I hope you haven't got any long-range plans.' Then I thought he was going to take a Mickey Mantle swing with that club, but the other cop pulled me away and threw me into the patrol car."

"I couldn't imagine why anyone would want to hassle me that much. I don't try to hurt people, and I certainly don't when I smoke grass. I'm not a criminal, and I don't deserve to be treated like one."

"A cop's job is to protect society."

"That's right, man, but sometimes he protects it from the wrong people. Any society that has to make a big deal out of busting some dude for two jays is weak and dying, like the Romans. The Romans didn't start to persecute the Christians until after they had become decadent."

"When I was sitting in jail, waiting for my lady to bail me out, I met this neat Mexican guy. He told me a great cop joke. Do you want to hear it?"

"Sure."

"Actually, it's a California cop joke."

"How many California cops does it take to screw in a light bulb?"

"How many?"

"Just two. One to perform the actual screwing, and other to check the electrician's green card."

"That isn't very funny." The young man shrugged his shoulders.

"So it's not funny. I told you I heard it from a Mexican dude, not Cheech and Chong." The cop laughed.

"So what finally happened with the bust?"

"The whole thing was thrown out of court. My lawyer argued that I had been brutalized. When I was tossed into the police car, I hit my head on the door and was cut pretty badly. It needed three stitches, so the judge let me go. She was a nice lady."

They finished the joint and were silent for several moments. Then the cop spoke.

"Hey kid, do you want to hear a hippy joke?"

"Okay."

"How do you get a hippy to cross the road?" The young man indicated that he did not know.

"Handcuff him to a chicken."

The young man blurted out a throttled laugh and then put his head between his knees, almost like he was going to be sick.

"That's pretty good, man."

He stood straight up, still laughing, and bowed deeply from the waist.

"I salute your comic genius, O my brother." They laughed together for a few moments, before falling silent again.

The cop's lights were starting to dim. He still felt some pain, but he felt good, too.

"Hey kid. Why did your girlfriend go for help, and not you?"

"She's faster than I am (burp)."

The young man became excited.

"Hey, here she comes, man! I think I hear the ambulance!"

The cop neither saw the young man's lady, nor did he hear the ambulance. He was at home on a Sunday afternoon, barbecuing steaks in his back yard. The entire area was under about a thousand feet of water.

He cursed the coals in his gas grill for not staying lit, and there was a large pile of empty lighter fluid cans that seemed to grow as if it were alive.

Suddenly, it was alive, and in the form of a huge shark. The beast was chasing members of the cop's family and even tried to menace the cop. He brandished his cooking fork, and the animal retreated warily.

"You'd better lay off me, or you'll be a fish steak, and you'd better believe it."

He was watching a televised religious service and thought to himself, "How can anyone believe these stupid video preachers." The evangelist stuck his head out of the television set and looked at the cop.

"Stupid? What's so stupid about trying to save your soul?

"Do you want to save your soul, brother? For an extra five dollars we'll drive a nail into your left foot and give you a spit shine."

The cop fled from his home and swam upward, escaping the murky depths.

On his way up, he met his next door neighbor, Bill, who was wearing scuba suit.

"Bill! What are you doing here?"

"I'm not Bill," replied the figure, who started to poke the cop with a harpoon.

"I'm sorry, Phil! What are you doing here?" Phil lived next door to Bill, and the two bore a striking resemblance to each other.

"I'm not Phil, either" was the answer, and the scuba man continued his prodding.

"Then why are you bothering me? Leave me alone. Who are you?"

"I'm your mind. Watch out for the bricks!"

A load of bricks fell from nowhere, and several struck the cop. The figure nudged him a few more times, then went away, laughing, leaving the bruised and bloody cop to swim by himself toward the surface.

A beautiful naked lady stopped his upward flight and soothed his wounds.

"I am your desires. Embrace me."

Together they rolled with ocean current, kissing and hugging. He felt her firm breasts and soft skin. She broke away from him for a moment and took a backgammon board from the back of a passing sting ray.

His first roll was miserable, a four and a three. She rolled a six and a two and immediately hit the nearest blot. She smiled as he placed his checker on the bar. He smiled back and tossed double fours.

* * *

The paramedics soon arrived with the ambulance and had lifted the cop, now sleeping peacefully, onto a stretcher. They moved him out through the alley, to where the ambulance and about a score of nosers waited. Neither the young man nor his lady was there.

A black Cadillac sedan pulled up and parked on the other side of the street. A middle-aged and finely dressed woman emerged from the back seat and approached one of the cops who were standing by.

"What's happened here, Officer?"

"The officer was shot by an unknown assailant. We got a tip and found him in back of the alley. I think he's in pretty bad shape."

She looked at the face of the cop being loaded into the ambulance, then covered her mouth in an expression of recognition.

"Officer, I was accosted by a mugger here, just before dawn. This officer rescued me. He chased the man into that alley."

"Why didn't you notify the precinct? We'd have sent help."

"I was too frightened, I guess. Anyway, the man didn't appear to be armed, so I assumed that the officer would catch him. I wasn't hurt."

"He sure was armed, lady. Did you hear any shots?"

"No."

She approached one of the paramedics.

"How is he?"

"We don't know, lady. He's alive, at least. Step away, please. We've got to go now."

The ambulance's siren and flashing light began to work, and the driver put it into gear and started to drive away. She shouted after them:

"You don't know! What do you mean you don't know? Will he live, or will he die? What of him, then?"

The driver did not hear her. He was concentrating on getting to the hospital in time. A portable cassette player on the seat blared 'Born To Run' by Bruce Springsteen, but it was barely audible above the siren.

There was a bit of early morning drizzle, and the driver fiddled with the windshield wipers. He needed to keep his vision as clear as possible.

The avenue curved toward the hospital in such a way that the driver could look directly through the front windshields of the stopped cars and at the zombie-like faces of the people within. Long after the ambulance passed, they all took the road to the sea, but they had to wait until the traffic light allowed them to go.

THIS LUCENT WINE, ON WINTER'S NIGHT . . .

This lucent wine, on winter's night, intrudes
Upon my mind like rapid volleys burst
From darkened guns in warring fields, that strike
With humous irony; abandoned dreams
Lie trampled in the rush of slow defeat.
The air broods, pregnant, thick with honeyvine
And muscadine. And yet this wine is pink—
Elusive, oily, irresistible.
A lamp's light wavers slightly as the wind
Accosts its source, and frost, a creeping weed,
Is held at bay by battalions of flame.
The crackle of those armaments, the hiss
Awakens me to answer . . . did it call
My name?

Startled, I bolt, escape the blast.
A musty basement door appears, refuge
From desperate pointlessness. I seek a dark
Close niche, outwait the insane beast outside.
A nightglow coldly gels the rotting air,
Mute spectres peer from shambled rest:
Huge leather chairs and old bookshelves repel
Yet, somehow, comfort me. I know this place.
I know the shadows on the walls, the chair
Without an arm, each dog-eared page in each
Old book, and yes, that box, that rust-hinged
box;

It holds a well-worn name. I hesitate
to lift the lid, to break the seal at last.
Outside, the battle rages, brothers call
Across the lines.

The box is open now,
The armies' fate is sealed. A blood-red flame
Consumes the room, a liquid, flickering fire.
The glass gleams bright on winter's night, the
stem
Atwirl, fine crystal at my fingertips.

My host leans near, "It's muscadine, our best
Home wine, enchanting, isn't it?" I can
But nod and feebly toast that vintage year.

—Lisa Peacock

**Honorable Mention,
Sigma Tau Delta Poetry Contest**



DARK PLACE

In our dark womb her smile's the light
As softly her lips choose the pace
To brush their pleasure on my face
And her hand rests on my heart's might.
A darkened Falls pours from a height
To splash my cheeks with softest lace,
To its source my fingers race
Its flows they test, and curls fight.

O curse this birth to harsher light
Where nature's vice and love's disgrace,
But bring me back to passion's place
Where heartbeats keep the timeless night.

—B. G. Martin

**Honorable Mention,
Sigma Tau Delta Poetry Contest**

Etching by Betsy Burts



How Conservative is Auburn?

by Beth J. Dees

Several students casually leaned against the wall on Haley Center concourse. In small groups neatly dressed guys talked with pink-cheeked, pony-tailed girls until the class bell rang and several sauntered off to class. For years this scene has taken place at Auburn.

"It's too damn conservative," replied Tim Bumpers, propped against the wall and squinting into the sun, to the question, "How conservative is Auburn?"

The question sounds loaded and perhaps it is, but after questioning a number of Auburn students and professors about campus political attitudes, the term "liberal" went unmentioned as the political leaning of the students, while respondents detailed to what degree Auburn was conservative.

Many agreed with Bumpers that Auburn students are riding high on the wave of conservatism rising in the nation, but most did not share his contempt but instead were proud of the label.

"Compared nation-wide, Auburn University is a conservative haven," said Wesley P. Newton, a history professor. While in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when a tidal wave of liberal sentiment flooded the country's colleges with violent demonstrations and riots, Auburn experienced only ripples in its otherwise conservative calm.

"We didn't have flower children," said Gerald W. Johnson, head of Auburn's political science department. "There was just an increased sensitivity to social issues."

No one interviewed had a hard time placing Auburn on the conservative side of the political fence, but several had trouble deciding just what the labels "liberal" and "conservative" meant. In one study done in introductory government classes, Johnson said that over half of those who classified themselves as liberal were actually conservative according to their positions on the issues in question.

Steve Farish, a student known on campus for his conservative attitudes, defined the term conservative as "someone who seeks less change." Then, when asked about all the changes the new conservatives in Congress were making, he added to his definition, "and seeking a return to the traditional way of doing things."

Dr. William Allen, who teaches government classes, said, "You're a conservative when you have to wait and see what everybody else is going to do."

The history behind the political labels further adds to the ambiguity because the meaning of two terms have overlapped more than once in the past. About a century ago "liberals" opposed government intervention in the free market, whereas today "conservatives" oppose regulation by the governing powers. Even as recently as a few years ago, liberals were the ones clamoring for first amendment rights, such as freedom of expression. Today members of the new

Lithograph by Randy Davis

right conservative groups demand the same.

Tradition. That is a key word used around Auburn. It is carried on in the alma mater, Saturday football games, the Greek system: all symbols of tradition. In dictionaries it is the gist of the definition of conservative.

The fact that Auburn University started out as a land grant institution, established primarily for agricultural instruction and research, may have given Auburn its base for conservatism. One student, Glenn Long, thinks so.

"Farmers tend to be ultra-conservative," he said. A campus-wide survey conducted in 1972 by the political science department lends support to Long's theory when it ranked the school of agriculture first in conservative tendencies and the school of arts and science last.

Career choice can be connected to political preference, as can religion. Allen, a recent Auburn graduate, said, "Auburn University, (University of) Alabama and (University of) Mississippi are monograms on the South's Bible belt," indicating that religious activism is a mark of a more conservative school. He also remarked that he felt Auburn was more conservative now than five years ago.

Professor Johnson agreed with Allen's remarks, after analyzing the results of his liberal/conservative poll taken in his state and local government classes last quarter and comparing them to results from classes polled for the past 10 years.

"At least half a dozen students scored in the high 20s and 30s on the conservative scale and I had never seen anything over 22 in the past," he said. "Anything over 15 is considered to be a clear ideologue."

Ideologues, he explained, show highly consistent attitudes toward a certain theory or political leaning. Positions on issues touching on international relations, education, private enterprise and civil liberties are indications of whether an individual has liberal or conservative tendencies. Also, these tendencies indicate whether one considers himself a Democrat or a Republican. Generally speaking, Republicans are associated with conservatism, and Democrats are associated with liberalism, although lib-

eral Republicans and conservative Democrats do exist.

Participation in political clubs on campus shows that The Young Republicans are increasing in size, while The Young Democrats aren't. Rod Hastie of The Young Republicans boasts of twice-monthly meetings. "We usually have about 30 in attendance," he said, adding that the campus group also had made frequent contacts with the state and national Republican committees. Meanwhile, The Young Democrats have met only once since the election with six people attending, said one member.

Auburn's Office of Institutional Analysis didn't bear out the increase-in-conservatism theory when it determined that more than 50 percent of this year's entering freshmen maintained a middle-of-the-road political trend in answering questions on ecology, ERA, crime, energy, and abortion.

But, judging from local newspaper articles, letters to the editor and editorials, many see a more forceful swing to the right. Dick Parker, *Auburn Bulletin* editor and former *Plainsman* editor, said of Steve Farish, recently elected *Plainsman* editor, "He rode in on the wave of conservatism growing ever stronger on campus and is expected to carry *The Plainsman* to new rights." He added, "It's been a long time since *The Plainsman* advocated equal rights for women, welfare assistance for abortions and national health insurance. Don't look for those programs to get much support next year."

Rick Harmon, a graduate student in political science and former *Plainsman* editor, also viewed the expected shift with alarm. "It upsets me, and I see it as a problem," he said. "On a campus newspaper if all the editorial writers seem conservative, it keeps the rest of the staff writing that way. I know plenty of people that abhor conservatism," he said and pointed out that he thought that they may have stopped reading the college paper. "If both sides are presented, they (the liberals) feel like they have some support."

One *Plainsman* editor, Beverly Bradford, in 1969 offered support to the liberal students who were a loud minority that year. In February of that year, coverage was given to the student group

called The Human Rights Forum, when it invited Rev. James S. Coffin, who was a nationally-known leader in the movement opposing American involvement in the Vietnam War, from Yale to speak at the university. He had recently been convicted by a U.S. District Court for helping draft dodgers, although that decision was being appealed.

University President Harry M. Philpott tried to bar Coffin's appearance, but students and faculty members alike brought a case against him, in which District Judge Frank M. Johnson ruled that Philpott's action was an infringement on the right of free speech.

"Rumors flew around that riots would break out if he spoke," said Professor Newton, a participant in the case. "But there was no violence, no cat-calling, no tomatoes when Coffin spoke before a packed house in the Student Activities building."

Even though the students bringing the suit won the battle against the administration to bring Coffin on campus, Newton thinks that, if a poll of the campus had been taken, the majority would have said that Judge Johnson was wrong and that Coffin would not have been allowed to come.

Other *Plainsman* coverage of Auburn's past liberal ripples involve Strike Day, Thursday, May 21, 1971. A lead story on the front page that day described the action as "a nonviolent student strike to provide an informative dialogue on the war in South East Asia." Editorials in that issue urged students not to go to classes but to take part instead in discussions, petition signings, a peaceful picket line and speeches held through the day. Again, on Auburn's campus there was no violence; there were no disruptions.

Looking back, Newton refers to the event as a movement by a minority of students. "It was a lark," he commented. "People were coming to see what was going on. It was just an unusual event in the Auburn routine."

Auburn's routine has continued much the same way since, with only a few glimmers of liberalism. Indeed, when the national political pendulum swung to the right, it found perfect timing with Auburn's conservative student body.

Kelco's Revenge

by Kelly Kealoha Carter

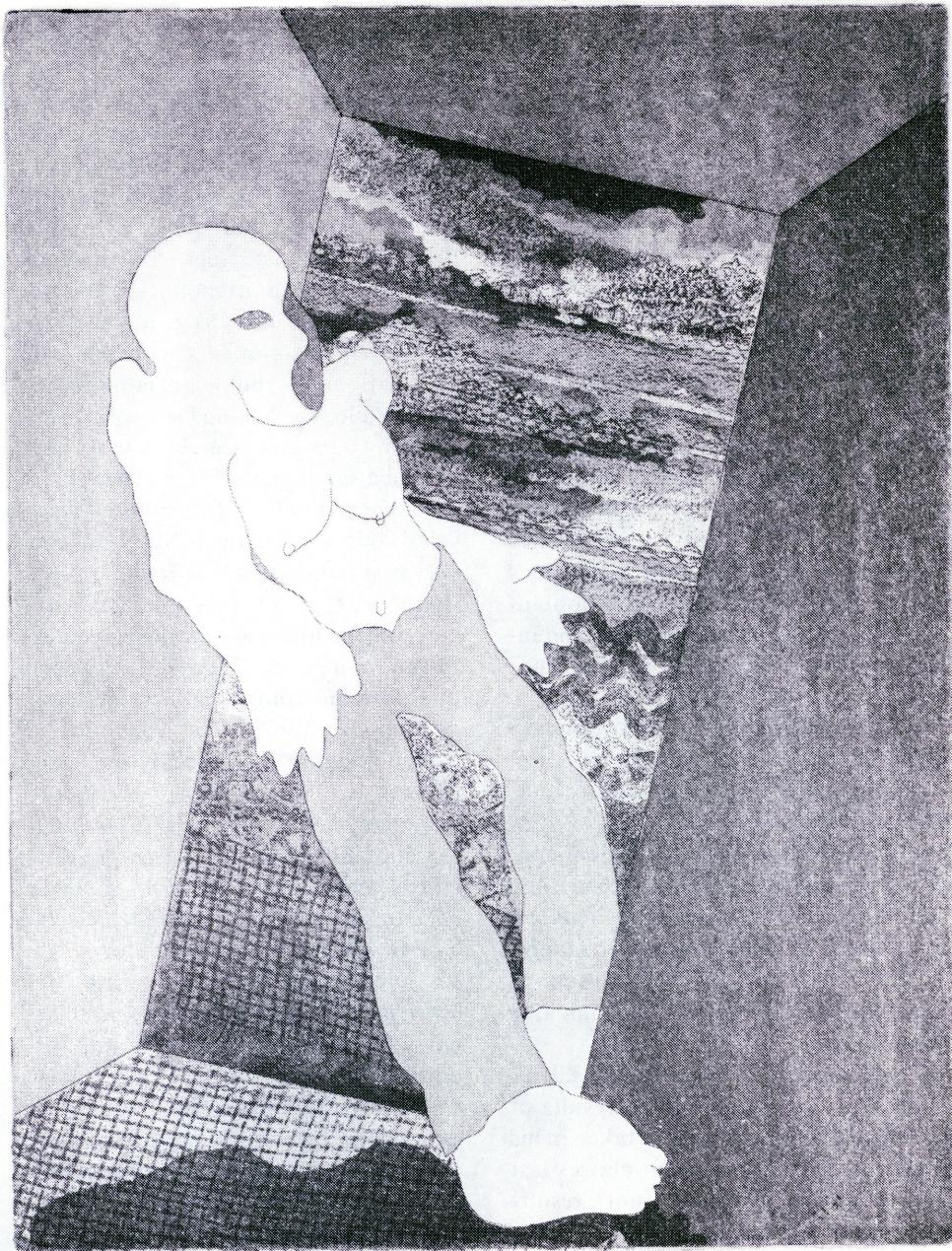
He awoke, and the pessimistic thoughts immediately pounded his brain. "I'm so tired. I don't want to get out of bed. I only had five and a half hours of sleep last night. How can anyone function on five and a half hours of sleep?" The thought went unanswered, so he continued, "I'll bet we're going to have that quiz today. I know I should have studied. I'm going to have to make some time today to learn the material," he promised himself. He looked at the clock "7:30," he thought. "That means I can sleep for thirty more minutes." He tugged the blanket over his head and did.

Later, in the shower, he listened to "The Music Morning Show" on the campus radio station. "How can those guys sound so cheerful?" he wondered. "Good MONDAY mornin' to ya!!" the radio shouted. "Sure...," he answered sarn-

castically. As he stood under the warm stream of steam from the shower head, he remembered an obscure rock group called "The Boomtown Rats" and their song "I Don't Like Mondays." Someone had once told him it was a true story about a young girl who was not quite right in the head. "The world must be full of those kind of people," he innocently stated aloud. She had taken a gun to school with her one day and shot her classmates. Later, when asked why, she simply said, "I Don't Like Mondays." "That's a catchy tune," he thought and began to sing "I don't like Mondays..."

"There," he said as he looked in the full-length mirror. "All set." He was somewhere under his large coat, his wool watch cap, his muffler and his rabbit-fur-lined gloves. Only his eyes were exposed—funny, green eyes. "Oops! Almost

Etching by Dirk Hays



forgot..." he said and slipped on his Navy pilot's sunglasses. "There!" The brightest thing he wore was his faded blue jeans. He gazed with shaded eyes at his visage in the mirror. "I look sinister," he thought. "I *feel* sinister!" he added, flexing his gloved fingers. A twinkle danced in his darkened eye. "This is neat!"

He dressed this way to keep warm on his way to school. Each day he had to ride his bike more than a mile. Once outside, he realized that it was warm today. It looked like he had overdressed. "No matter," he thought and peddled on his merry way. "Hey! I'm going to be late!"

He had not seen the car; he just did not know it was there. He had cut across the gas station as usual. "The cars have to look out for me," he had always thought. His head and neck, bound tightly in the muffler, could not move side to side. To look to either side, he had to turn his whole body the little he could on his small racing saddle. To look behind, he would throw his head under his armpit and view the rear situation with a disorienting, upside-down glance. Today it had all deceived him. A honking horn, a screech of brakes—they, more than anything else, had knocked him from his bike. The car had stopped short of actually finishing the job. He slid across the asphalt, tangled in his bike. His cry of "Help!" went unheard, muffled beneath the mask he wore. Unhurt but embarrassed, he quickly limped to his feet, saw his sunglasses lying smashed on the pavement and sped sorely off on his bruised bike, the rear wheel wobbling woefully.

He carried the mangled machine into Haley Center, as was his custom everyday. He had a special place inside that he locked it up so that the rain could not get to it. He set it down off his shoulder, swung his leg over and mounted it. It made an incessant scraping noise each time the wheels revolved. He wondered, "How much is *that* going to cost to fix?" He usually enjoyed peering into classrooms and offices as he ticked by on his bike, grinning under his Mask of Anonymity, but he did not enjoy it today. He felt he was getting more attention than usual from the pedestrians in the hall. His ripped and torn clothes would account for that. He also felt soreness and pain in his body—and a firm grip on the frame of his bike jerking him to a halt. He and the bike fell over in the hall. "I told you to stop! Didn't you hear me?"

He looked up into the angry, red face of Campus Security. "No sir," he answered weakly.

"Well, son," he said, as he dragged the boy to his feet, "now that we've caught you, you won't be doing this again!" The man proceeded to pull the student in the general direction of the awaiting patrol car.

"Dr. Williams, Mrs. Cartex to see you."

"Uh, Send her right in."

"Mrs. Cartex? What is it that I can do for you?"

"Well, doctor, it's my son."

"Your son?"

"Yes, Kelco Cartex. He's a student here."

"What about your son, Mrs. Cartex?"

"I'm afraid he needs help, so I thought I would come here to the Psychological Counseling Department. You see, he's often depressed and will talk aloud about things that don't make sense. It's as if he's talking to someone else, and you

only hear half of the conversation. Then there's the time when he..."

The Security Office finally let him go after he had missed all of his classes for the day. Boy, was he scared. "Boy, am I scared," he thought. They had threatened him with suspension, fines and a police record. They had no intention of doing those things but just wanted to shake him up. They did a good job. In the end, they made him promise never to ride his bike inside Haley Center, which was common sense in the first place—someone could get hurt. Then he was free to go. While walking, he filled his mind with thoughts that were familiarly pessimistic. He recalled the line from a letter that a girl had once written him: "So why don't you get yourself together before you hurt someone else?" His feet led him to the unlocked apartment of a friend, a hunting fanatic. He walked in. "No one home," he thought. "Good...."

"Well, Mrs. Cartex, after listening to you and reviewing his record here...."

He found the shiny handgun and looked at it wonderingly.

"...I can see that fantasy plays a big part in Kelco's life."

"Wouldn't it be neat if everyone could be here?" he said softly. "Then maybe they would know." His voice grew stronger. "Then maybe they would understand." He knelt with his back to the wall under the "Black Sabbath" poster.

Dr. Williams continued, "I think he just might be having a little trouble adjusting to college, that's all. In fact, I'd be willing to say that..."

He slid the cold steel of the barrel into his mouth.

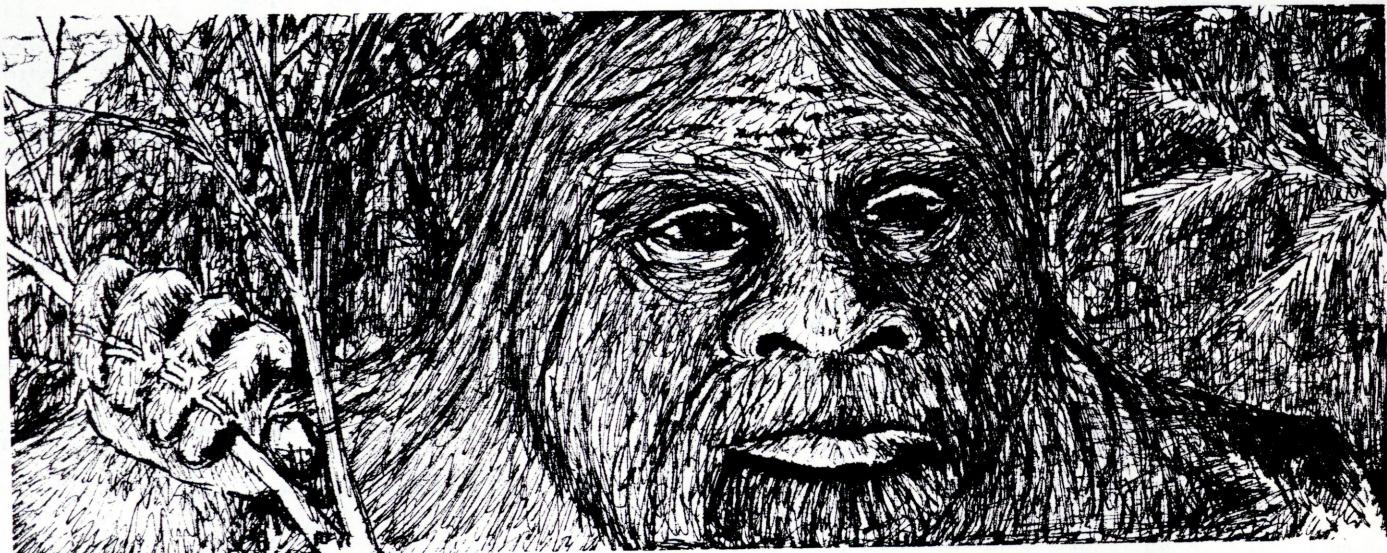
"...Kelco's perfectly normal."

Red bits of blood and white bits of brain savagely splattered across the poster.

DECEPTION

Of course there is difference now
even in the early morning the silent one
the gray one the leaves dropping like flies
the cold rising up through the floor
the rivers in the palm turning into ice

—dean wiseman golden



The Search for Bigfoot

by Greg Ward

The editorial staff of the Auburn Circle, in an effort to broaden the scope of the magazine, has decided to sponsor a series of investigations into the fascinating world of nature. It was decided that our first project would be an expedition to search for the creature known as Bigfoot.

After much effort we persuaded world famous explorer Rasil Bathbone to lead the search. His reports came to us in letter form at predetermined times.

His reports follow:

1.

Dear editor:

I want to congratulate you on your valiant decision to investigate the various sightings of the creature known as Bigfoot for the Auburn Circle. The \$5,000 advance I was given has been put to good use in purchasing only the finest and most necessary equipment and in hiring the best of advisors. I believe that our breakthrough will catapult your magazine into the national prominence it deserves.

Sincerely,

Rasil Bathbone

2.

Dear editor:

Here is the first report on my trek to discover Bigfoot. According to my sources, Bigfoot has been reported, oddly enough, in your own back yard, around the Auburn area. The sightings are especially numerous around the girl's dorms on the Auburn University campus, more often than not, when the co-eds are sunbathing. I think that you feel just as I do about this atrocious intrusion on their privacy: it must be stopped!

If you will forward another \$1,000 for the purchase of a very needed set of binoculars and a telescopic camera, our research will be greatly enhanced. Our discoveries will shortly set the scientific community on its ear.

With great expectations,

Rasil Bathbone

3.

Dear editor:

My congratulations and compliments to you as I report on our partial success. The purchase of the equipment and my research has paid off. (By the way, I was greatly helped by the hiring of some poor fraternity boys—you should have seen the zeal with which they helped me watch for Bigfoot in the areas around the sunbathing co-eds.) Bigfoot has been forced into near seclusion. The last time he was sighted was by a gentleman driving north on I-85, who confidentially informed us of sighting Bigfoot near the small town of Huguley, Ala., doubtless on his way to Atlanta.

I am on my way (never fear!) to try to save the population of the Hub of the South. I know that you will not hesitate to send a mere \$2,000 to get our informant out of jail (some frivolous charge of drunk driving) and to purchase further materials. Never fear, success is within sight.

Sincerely,


Rasil Bathbone

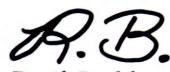
4.

Dear editor:

I have reached Atlanta and am amazed at what I have found. Previous searches for Bigfoot have been singularly unsuccessful and I, your fearless investigator, have found out why. Until now, my predecessors have considered Bigfoot an uncivilized beast—they couldn't have been more mistaken. Bigfoot fits very well into the nightlife of the city. In fact, his crudeness seems to be attractive to the women.

I, with your most generous backing, am about to enter into the most dangerous and most comprehensive search in the history of mankind. I am going to plunge into the nightlife of Atlanta in search of the beast. I tremble with fear at the thought of going into discos and sleazy singles bars in search of this loathsome creature. But I will go to any lengths in this great quest for the glory of the Auburn Circle.

Fearlessly,


Rasil Bathbone

P.S. I am forwarding my bill from the Atlanta Hilton and the Luxury Limosine service to you. These accoutrements are indispensable as a cover. We can't be too careful with so much at stake.

5.

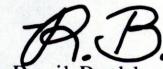
Dear editor:

We are tracking a most dangerous, crafty and elusive creature! No wonder he has never been captured. Pulling a

fast one, Bigfoot has slipped from my grasp and left for, of all places, Panama City, Fla. But never fear; I am not giving up in this great quest. I will not quit, no matter how many women I have to find to help me blend into the crowd on the beach.

I know that the Auburn Circle backs me completely in this search for what may turn out to be the famous "missing link." What liberal minds won't do in the search for knowledge. For another small advance—say about \$3,000—I will be better able to venture forth.

Until the search is over, I am your faithful servant,


Rasil Bathbone

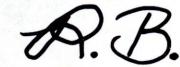
Dear editor:

I have tracked animals the world over, and never have I encountered a more cunning foe! You will be pleased to learn, and may feel confident to pass on to your readers, that our hard work has somewhat paid off in that we have discovered an amazing bit of information about Bigfoot. He swims. That's right, and he can go for very long distances. I have this information from an exceptional group of young people—obviously medical students since, when I came practicing upon them, they were giving injections to each other.

When I told them of my important mission, they congratulated me on my courage (I gave the credit to the Auburn Circle) and told me of a chilling encounter which they had had moments before I arrived. After stealing one of their bags, a creature which they believe to be Bigfoot dove into the ocean and began swimming in the general direction of the Bahamas.

But don't be concerned. Your fearless investigator will stop at no ends. I have already bought two first-class tickets to the Bahamas—I found an exceptional fellow scientist who is working on her Ph.D. in anthropology—and am sending this information from the airport. I am about to begin what I believe to be the final leg of this most dangerous mission. We shall all soon be glorying in our accomplishments.

Forever yours,


Rasil Bathbone

Editor's note: This was the last communication we received from our courageous investigator. That is, except for a brief wire requesting \$5,000 for materials, which we promptly sent. Upon becoming concerned about him we sent some of our best men to the Bahamas to search for him. But, alas, he has disappeared without a trace. We fear the worst.



Lithograph by Rick Smith

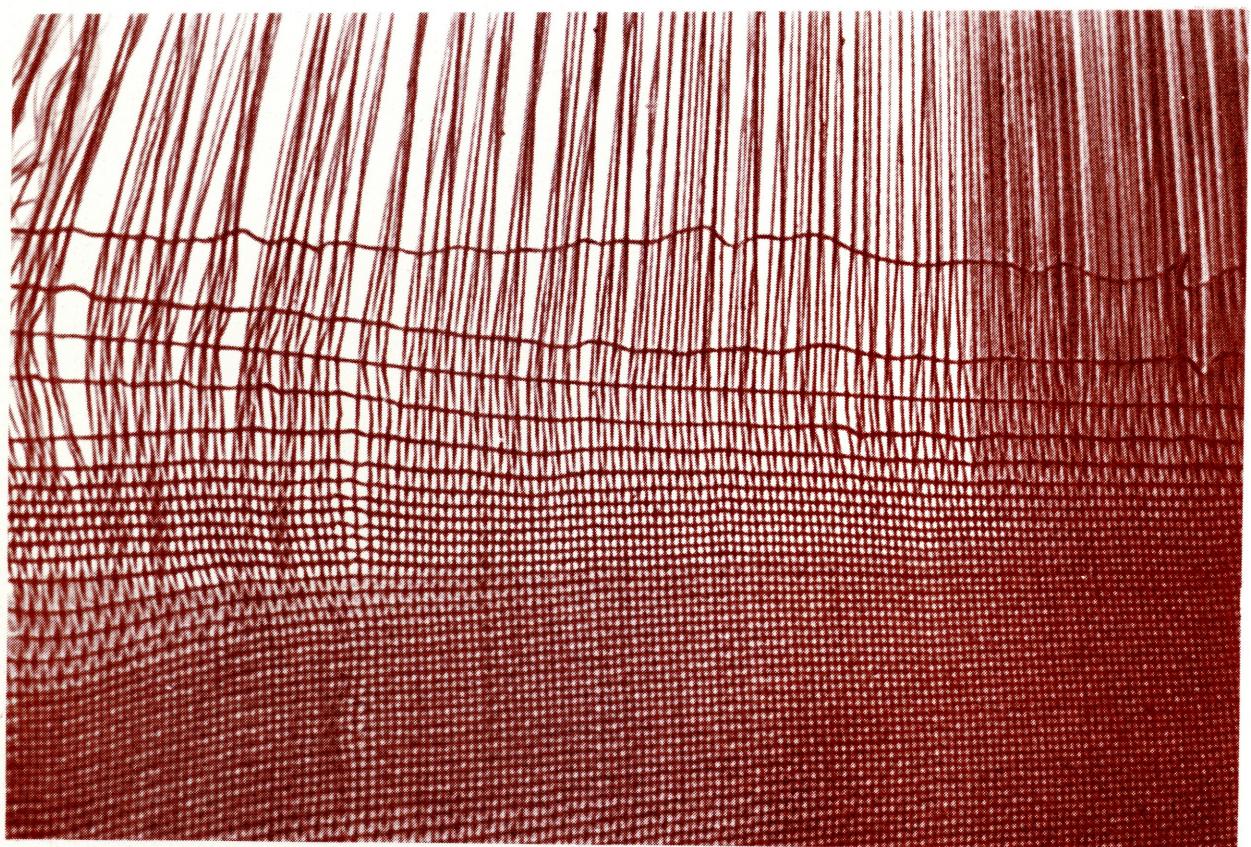


Photo by Carol Buettner

